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THE MOHAWK CHIEF.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE FALL OF THE NAN SOUNG."

A people whose sad race is done,
Whose tribes did melt away:
As mists that in the morning sun,
Dissolve them in his ray.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

London:
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1857.

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THE

MOHAWK CHIEF.

CHAPTER I.

Awake! awake! for the cold moon's ray
Succeeds to the scorching heats of day.
Oh! sing, oh! sing, for the silvery light
Of our peerless queen is fair and bright,
And many a star shines on her way
To guide her to her halls to-night.

Aloft! and aloft! your voices raise,
To join in our song and hymn of praise.
Loud! and loud, let the just anthem rise—
Your tribute to her who rules the skies—
Who toils through Heaven's trackless ways,
Far, far beyond where th' eagle flies.

Oh! would that her reign could last for e'er—
Would, too, that Heaven would grant our prayer,
Then th' usurping sun would rise no more;
Alone she'd reign whom we adore;
But now the time, alas! is near,
Her short dominion will be o'er.

At the period at which our tale opened, Tasharah had led the pursuit for upwards of two

days; and now, on the third, appeared the first opportunity that had yet offered itself to attempt to put his hazardous and bold design into execution—of seeking to rescue Maria out of the hands of a force sevenfold as numerous as his own, and which he purposed to effect at the passage of a ford his enemies must necessarily pass, and where he considered that the advantage of position would fully make up for his numerical inferiority. This plan, as it required his own prior occupation of a point towards which his foes were hastening, and from which they could not be very far distant, had caused him, partly from motives of prudence, and partly for speed, to quit their trail and hurry forwards by a road well known to himself.

Following the course of the small rivulet, he was guided by it to the banks of a large stream to which it was tributary. Here a rough kind of raft was hastily constructed for the passage of the Major and of the fire arms, which Kennedy and the Mohawks towed in safety to the opposite bank. With silent speed, and observing the greatest cau-

tion in their motions, they continued their course, and on arriving at the point they sought, they found everything that their most sanguine wishes could have desired; for the quick and acute faculties of the Indians speedily ascertained that their foes had neither passed nor were in the immediate neighbourhood. How long they would continue thus untroubled by their presence could not, however, be exactly determined, and to be prepared against their arrival, Tasharah placed his small troop to best advantage, and gave briefly the following directions.

That, when the enemy should be arrived, not a shot was to be fired until he (the Chief) should give the signal, which was to be the discharge of his own piece. Then those who surrounded, or were nearest to the latter, only were to be particularly marked; for the Mohawk had surmised, as Maria would be utterly unable to proceed on foot at the same rate of speed as her captors, that they must have borne her, and from his knowledge of Indian customs, he felt convinced that this must have been the method employed.

As her rescue was almost the sole object his party had in view, he considered it would best be effected by causing as great confusion as possible among those nearest to the precious charge, and which he hoped to heighten into a panic by a sudden attack upon that portion of his foemen, who, at the same moment, would be exposed to a galling fire from the two whites, for he had designed that neither Frank nor the Major should take part in the actual encounter, as he considered that some well-conducted shots would be far more serviceable to him than the headlong valor of the young man, or the weak and almost ineffectual strength of his older comrade. The ambush being arranged, Tasharah and his party anxiously awaited the expected arrival of their enemies; but they saw the shades of night rapidly begin to fall around, and with regret distant objects became less apparent as the shadowy mantle of evening obscured them by its gradually thickening veil. Now, the bat first flitted by; and then the whip-poor-wills, and frogs, and numberless others of the

nocturnal tribes commenced hailing, in most unmusical concert, this, to them, breaking of another day; and the sounds and tones they produced were not very unlike as if sundry files, of various sizes, and at different distances, had suddenly commenced operations, being occasionally diversified by two pieces of iron striking against each other. Now, one by one, each star put forth its shining head, to be in readiness, like obsequious courtiers, to pay homage to their silvery queen.

Tasharah suspecting from the lateness of the hour that it was improbable his enemies would appear before the next day's sun, like a prudent general, resolved to refresh his troops, least inured to fatigue and vigil, by some small portion of rest, and therefore recommended both Frank and the Major to follow the example of the birds of heaven, which had for a considerable time placed their heads beneath their wings, and sought the refreshment of sleep. Then leaving one of his own followers to watch the passage—for he considered that a warrior upon his path

should never require repose—he, with the other crossed over to seek, if it were possible, by a reconnoissance to discover the position of his foes.

Vernon and Kennedy, although they had undergone within the last few days fatigue, which not even some of the sturdiest borderers would have been ashamed to confess as excessive, and might, availing themselves of the permission of Tasharah, have yielded not only without compunction, but also with pleasure, to the power of the sleeping god, in place of being grateful for the advice, and speedily sinking into the arms of slumber, they both appeared unsolicitous for the presence of the divinity.

The mind, when highly excited, is generally more than a match for the severest animal pain; and thus the sense of doubt and dread in the breast of the Major, bore him triumphantly against exertions which would, at other times have overpowered him; but with Kennedy the case was different; for though to him to have extended himself, and acknowledged at once the

dominion of sleep, would have been the greatest luxury possible, even if the lofty heavens served as his canopy, and the broad earth as his bed, yet was he prohibited from giving way to his desires on account of the Major, who did not appear inclined to set him this example, and his respect forbade him from slumbering whilst the other watched. Though strongly he combated it, the young woodsman felt the inclination increase each moment. He longed for some occupation by which to keep his drowsiness off. He wished that Vernon would speak, for conversation might then serve as a bulwark behind which he could retire, and bid defiance to this feeling. He looked towards the Heavens, but being no astronomer its sparkling throng could furnish him with no idea; to look before him was just as bad; for the impervious darkness was equally unkind. He was now all but reduced to an unconditional surrender of his mind to the thraldom of fancy and of folly. He had just recovered himself whilst in the act of a most uncompromising doze, and the sound which awoke

him, was one of those equivocal noises, which so many in his position must have experienced, and which partakes equally of the nature of a snore and of a grunt. Again more heavily did sleep press upon his eyelids, seeming as the precursor of a still more serious attack upon the free exercise of his powers of judgment, when the sound of a sigh broke like music upon his ears, and, potent as some cabalistic word, dispelled the web which was being woven around him, furnishing at the same moment the so much desired opportunity of breaking the irksome silence.

"Never mind, Major," he said, "it's no use thinking about it now, but I promise you when I come across the thieving Frenchman, or any of his blackguards, I'll pepper them in a manner as will make them remember this precious march they've given us; and if they'll only come down here to-morrow, I'll put a stop to some of them from stealing young ladies again, and ambushing the Vernon volunteers."

"I thank you, Frank," replied Vernon, unable to repress a smile from crossing his countenance at

this attempt of the other at consolation, "and desire as heartily as yourself that an opportunity may soon occur to allow of your putting your promise into execution; I fear, however, that we shall be disappointed in encountering our enemies, who may take another direction, or our attack may fail by their gaining intelligence of our purpose and guarding against it; and really there appears to me so many chances and possibilities of our not succeeding, that I cannot but dread that one of them may occur, and destroy our hopes entirely."

"Oh, don't get thinking that way, Major, or you'll be miserable quick enough; now just see here—we're five, that's to say, three Indians, you, and me, and if we can't manage to come round a parcel of stupid Piquots, with a blundering fool of a Frenchman for a leader, why there must be something most precious wrong."

"And that is what I fear, Frank, there may be something wrong, and on this account we shall not succeed; in the first place, why does

Tasharah count so strongly upon their passing at this point? Is there no other road by which the Frenchman may escape and gain his home?"

"We've got him all right enough there, Major, and as to that are quite sure, for, you see, the Piquots want to get home as soon as they can, and as this is the quickest, and, as they fancy, the safest road to go by, for you see there's only one other, and that's the reg'lar trading track, and they wouldn't like the chance of a dozen or so of hunters out-lying round them, and picking them off all the way home; so down here they're sure enough to come, and make a try to pass over, not thinking one bit of our being before them, and once they're fairly in the water, you and I pepper away at them, while Tasharah gets the young lady."

"Well," observed Vernon, "supposing they do come down here, is there not a probability that they may discover our intention, and then, first placing a guard over Maria, with the remainder of their force, be enabled from their superiority of numbers, to force a passage, and

which, though the attempt may cost them dear, I do not understand or perceive how we can successfully oppose it."

"Oh, don't be afraid of that, Tasharah is well up to them; didn't you see how we came down here, and havn't left them much chance of finding out where we are? If they do hit upon our trail, they'll only think we've clean missed the ford."

"I wish, Frank," replied the Major, "that I could partake of your confidence, but should your expectations and my wishes be realised, remember I do not desire that the blood of the Frenchman should be spilled. His father at one period saved my life, in return for which I now would preserve that of his son, and, therefore, in the affray, should an opportunity occur for your destroying him, let it pass, and let not his blood be upon any over whom I possess an influence."

An expression of surprise crossed the countenance of the young woodsman as he listened to this request, which appeared to him perfectly unintel-

ligible, and in fact, caused him at first to doubt the evidence of his own senses; but when, after a few minutes' consideration, he came to understand that the purport of the Major was to recommend directly to his mercy, one, towards whom he entertained the most cordial hatred, he replied, enquiring for a clearer solution of the other's meaning, than his own understanding yielded,

"What! if I was to cover the rascal with my piece, not to pull; is that what you want, Major?"

"I requested you not to slay him, on account of the obligation I am under towards his family; what causes you to hesitate in promising me this?"

"Then I shan't do it, for see here, Major, though there isn't another thing I'd say no to you about, I can't help saying it now: but," he continued, slapping his thigh with energy, "I'll tell you what I'll do, if I get a sight of the thief, I'll fire, but won't hit him for you, because I'll send the bullet through him for my brother."

A silence of a few minutes ensued, for Vernon considering himself indebted to the father, desired still to protect the son, and that the life of the latter should not be taken through the agency of one with whom he was in immediate contact, and now bethought him of some expedient by the which to prevail upon his resolute companion.

As to Kennedy, he felt rather insulted by the proposition of the Major, possessing something like the sensations of a man who has detected another in the act of depriving him of some of his property, and feels not at the moment best inclined towards him for it, and half suspicious of a repetition of the attempt.

"Frank," observed Vernon, who felt grieved when he perceived that he had given offence to his companion, and desired to remove any unpleasant feeling his words might have given rise to, "when I asked you not to slay the Frenchman, my request was dictated from my desire to repay a deep debt of gratitude under which I conceive myself to lay, and in making it I forgot the

strong reasons you have to run counter to my wishes; I must allow you have good cause both for hating him, and desiring his destruction, but I spoke also from knowing that my daughter herself, would be far better pleased that her liberation should be effected without his meeting with what certainly is a just punishment."

"Good cause! Major," replied Kennedy, who had had his passions excited instead of being allayed, by the unhappy expression of the other, and which, reviving all his jealousy, caused him in place of feeling mercifully disposed towards Laborde, rather now to desire that he could feel the warm blood of his rival upon his hands, "good cause! Major, isn't the murder of one's own brother good enough cause to shoot every Frenchman up there in the Canadas, and I'll tell you what it is, if I only had the thief here nicely within range, I'd be precious sorry when I'd fired, because it would be all up with him, and I couldn't do it again. Why couldn't he have left my brother alone, instead of bringing his band

of savages about him, and then not killing him like a christian, but burning him as if he had been one of his own red yelling devils, instead of a right honest woodsman."

How long the conversation might have continued, and whether, from the opposite opinions of the two speakers it might not have concluded in a mutual coldness and dislike, it is impossible to say, for the reply of the Major was hindered by the arrival of Tasharah, whose presence before them formed the first intimation they received of his being returned from his bold and daring enterprise to discover the position of his enemies, and who had passed from the passage of the ford to where the Major was, a distance of near a hundred yards, with the quiet and stealthy pace of his race, so that not even the breaking of a twig, nor, save to attentive ears, the crushing of the herbage, could have given notice of his approach.

Eagerly Kennedy demanded the result of his observations, and the Indian in the short concise manner so characteristic of his people, replied,

"The Mohawk went forth as the adder, he crept among the tall grass, he sought for the Piquots who were hidden, but Tasharah can trace the snake through the dead leaves; the Piquots sleep, and let my brother tell in the ears of the grey-headed yengeese chief, that painted women will be here, when the sun is over the top of the tree that my brother sees by the running water."

By this, Kennedy understood that about an hour after day-break, their enemies would seek to pass, and from the confident tone of the Indian he perceived that they must also be perfectly unconscious of the trap laid for them.

As soon as politeness would allow, Frank communicated the pleasing intelligence to the Major, who, now that his fears were set at rest, yielded to the rather interested advice of the young woodsman, and composed himself to sleep. His adviser, doubtless considering that a physician should always taste his own prescription, offered now so little resistance to the combined attacks of long watchfulness and fatigue, that he was

carried away a most unresisting captive into the fanciful land of dreams, his bonds being composed of twined poppies, and his guardian, slumber's noiseless watchman.

Night now began to fade, and first, as in some mighty commonwealth, the starry rulers by the diminishing of their light told of the coming dissolution of the realms of darkness, and the black kingdom began to show symptoms of its foe's approach. Now the sentinels at the eastern portals have yielded up their charge—the other trembling cowards turn to ashy paleness, hesitate one minute and then are fled—but one of that bright and proud array remains; he shortly also is gone. Over the heavens spreads a pale grey light, proceeding from the east, and then conquering Aurora bids the sun arise to view her victory.

The lord of day was but just risen, and his career could boast of only a few minutes' age, when Tasharah awoke Kennedy by touching him upon the arm.

The latter starting from sleep and gazing around, expressed his surprise at the quickness

with which night had been succeeded by day. The Indian, who had been watching every symptom of the dawn, did not consider that the wings of light had in the least been hastened, merely replied by requiring Frank to awake the Major, for the respect with which superior age is regarded by his people, had furnished him with motives of compunction as to being principal in disturbing the old officer's rest; these scruples were not however experienced by the young woodsman.

Having recalled each to a fit state for the exercise of their faculties towards their fellow man's destruction, the chief placed the two whites in the position he had designed them to occupy.

With the different passions of confidence and doubt, Kennedy and Vernon awaited the coming of their foes in perfect silence, fearful almost to breathe, lest they should betray themselves to their watchful enemies.

Many and anxious were the glances directed by Kennedy towards the tree, the crowning of

whose topmost branch by the sun, had been indicated by the unerring sagacity of one of the most celebrated of the native chiefs, as the period when the Piquots would have accomplished the distance between where they slept and their arrival at the ford. To the impatient whites the minutes seemed as hours, and the sluggish wheels of time scarce to revolve upon their lazy axles.

Through the interstices and openings of the branches the sun could be perceived as he slowly and gradually toiled upwards towards the desired position.

The fiery orb mounted, and as his light fell upon them, each branch, and limb, and leaf, became of a lighter and brighter shade. Now he has gained the summit, and pours his unobstructed beams across the river, which seemed to dance forwards more merrily as it became conscious of his rays, and almost immediately afterwards, they perceived their expected foe wending his rapid way directly to the spot where the snare had been so well laid to entrap

him, and towards which, in perfect ignorance of its dangers, he was hastening.

Foremost, on the shoulders of four of the Indians, was borne a litter, which, with the instinctive feelings of a father, Vernon felt assured was the conveyance of his daughter; but a cloak spread over the top, so as to form a covering, prevented him from satisfying himself to a certainty.

That however, which engrossed Kennedy's attention, filling him with surprise, and appearing to him as inexplicable was, that instead of there being some twenty or thirty Piquots, with their leader Laborde attending upon and ready to protect their prize from being snatched away, there was only about a dozen, and this guard he could perceive was composed of the wounded from the late conflict, for nearly all had a limb or some other part of their bodies bound and bandaged up, according to the Indian fashion, and these, in place of proceeding in the usual cautious manner of their people, were apparently striving to proceed as quickly as possible, and

to be perfectly careless concerning the trail they left.

Unhesitatingly, the bearers of the litter plunged into the stream, and having crossed to the opposite bank, placed their burden down with the intention of taking a short rest. This had been expected by Tasharah, who lay concealed, and separated from them only by a very few paces. His rifle was raised, and flashing forth its contents, a Piquot had his momentary repose prolonged to one of an eternal duration. Instantaneously, the other Mohawks poured in their deadly discharge, but one foeman remained near to where Maria was: and, before he could raise his rifle—for both he and his comrades had carried their weapons with them in their disengaged hands—was pierced by the bullets of Kennedy and the Major, which finished his earthly career, and sent him to join his friends on their road to elysium. Without allowing his enemies one minute to recover from the surprise occasioned by the suddenness of the attack, Tasharah and his Mohawks, quitting their conceal-

ments, seized and availed themselves of the weapons, ready loaded and prepared for their hands, belonging to the fallen Piquots, and turned them upon the Indians who were struggling in the water. Three sunk to rise no more. The remainder, terrified at this destruction of their comrades, and perceiving, if they would revenge the latter's fall, that they must gain the opposite bank, and commence a contest where every advantage of position would be on the side of their adversaries, who might easily strike them down as they separately gained where he stood, came to the conclusion that the most prudent plan would be to retreat, and to consider the day as lost. Without replying to the exulting whoops of their enemies, they returned to the shore they had just quitted, and diving at once into the shelter of the wood, were lost to the sight of the attacking party.

Unmindful, as to their proceedings, the Mohawk leader, with a consideration uncommon among his people, at once undid the fastenings of the litter, without, even, delaying to secure a

single scalp; which his followers, not knowing how long this mood might continue, were eagerly appropriating, and well knowing that the superior quickness and dexterity of their chief would give him two while they were taking one, they proceeded at once to profit by his present disinterestedness. Maria at first shrank back, when she perceived, in place of her father, or some of her own people, a painted Indian stood before her; and she immediately feared that the contest, she had just heard, and which she had rightly attributed to an effort of her friends for her liberation, had terminated unfavourably for her own party, and that she was required by her captors to be a witness to their triumph; but her apprehensions were quickly set at rest by Tasharah, who, divining what was passing in the maiden's mind, observed,

"The eagles have flown away and left the dove—the greyhead warrior is near his daughter." As he spoke he extended his hand to help her to rise; and she, now assured that she listened to the voice of a friend, accepted his prof-

fered assistance, and stepped forth, when she beheld, with sensations far above pleasure, her father hastening towards her. Under the influence of her feelings, she flung herself into his arms, and burst into tears, not of sorrow, but of joy, pure and unalloyed. Tasharah, unable to comprehend a warmth to which his well schooled breast appeared a stranger, turned away, and commenced surveying, with a keen and eagle glance, the opposite shore: and from motives of delicacy, Kennedy also, for the present, kept aloof.

After some minutes, Vernon beckoned Frank towards him, for the purpose of receiving the acknowledgments of Maria. This the young man obeyed, without reluctance, and he listened with joyous pride to thanks, which came from lips, to have been permitted to touch which would have rendered his happiness alone proportionable to the riches of the possessor of the philosopher's stone: and with any thing but impatience did he attend to her words; for he could with delight have heard her speak, on this or

any other subject, for ever. When she had finished, although on ordinary occasions he was not wanting in a rough homely description of eloquence, yet on the present he felt as if his tongue had been positively tied, and he could only make an almost ineffectual effort at reply. In his confusion he actually got out, " that he hoped he might have the pleasure of doing it again." Of this Maria was any thing but desirous, and so expressed herself. Frank was upon the very point of blundering deeper into the mire, when Vernon, perceiving his embarrassment, came to his assistance, by suggesting the propriety of an immediate conference with the Indian chief.

Tasharah, being informed of the wishes of the Major, immediately complied with them. The council which ensued did not occupy a very long period, and its result was the determination of returning home by the safest and quickest road. Placing Maria in the centre, supported on one side by her father, and on the other by Kennedy, the Mohawk caused his two country-

men to bring up the rear, whilst he himself observed that no danger lurked upon the flanks or van: and it must be confessed Maria could not avoid looking upon his tall, athletic form, cast in nature's finest mould, without experiencing a feeling of admiration. Now, as his plumed head appeared gliding amidst the forest; and now, as drawn up to his fullest height, he examined cautiously, and suspiciously, each spot which might conceal a foe: or, as by the motion of his hand, he directed the party to avoid each place which appeared of a doubtful character, or where any obstacle would lay in their path.

Maria had often heard of the wonderful sagacity of the sons of the forest, in pursuing their way through the pathless and trackless wood, and who, without chart or compass, will proceed in a straight, undeviating line for hundreds of miles: a glance at the heavens, the moss on the trees, indicative of the position of the north, the course of some stream, or the direction of some star-gazing flower, together with a thousand other signs, which would escape the eye of his

less-accustomed and more civilised brother, directs him, unerringly, whither he would go. This was the first time, arrayed in all his natural grandeur, and without anything of civilisation to mar the effect, that she saw one of these free, proud men, just as she had so often pictured them in her imagination. We have before remarked, that Maria delighted in romance; and that these strange people, the red men, had often furnished her in tales which she delighted in listening to, with means of being gratified for hours together: and often had she taken pleasure in hearing recounted their contempt of the greatest suffering, of danger, and of death: frequently, during some narration, had she wept at their griefs, and sympathised with their loves, and often had been filled with admiration at their adventurous daring, and almost chivalrous valour. True she had shuddered at their barbarities, but for these she soon found some palliation or excuse; and in the eclat of the tale they were overlooked, or not considered. Thus, long before she was in her present position, she

had taught herself to look upon and regard a native warrior as a perfect hero. In Tasharah all her ideas and expectations were realised; nor were the praises, of both her own father and of Kennedy, wanting to bias her in his favor.

By the road they were now travelling, which both Kennedy and the Major recognised by many familiar objects, as being the one they had passed before, the two whites perceived that it was the intention of the chief to gain the point where they had crossed the river and had left their raft.

On enquiring, they found such to be the case, and the design of the Mohawk, was to return upon their own footsteps, as he considered that path to offer less probability of encountering their enemies.

It was mid-day when this spot was gained, and when arrived, in place of crossing directly over Tasharah motioned the whites to seat themselves, whilst he and his followers collecting some dry sticks, moss, and leaves, soon lit a good fire, by the aid of which, some slices of juicy venison

were cooked, one of the Mohawks during the march, having struck a deer, had preserved the most approved portions sufficient for present want.

The meat being dressed, or rather rendered by the action of the fire no longer raw, Tasharah invited all to join in the repast, and with an attention rare among his race, he presented the most delicate and prized morsels to Maria, and during the whole period of the meal, seemed more anxious to anticipate and satisfy, as far as lay in his power, her slightest wants, than solicitous as to his own.

This conduct, which to Maria, appeared perfectly consistent, on the contrary, seemed to the Major as being strange and unnatural. Whilst the daughter imagined that the gallantry of the Indian race had been very much traduced, the father, to whom their character was much better known, was at a loss to what to ascribe this inconsistency.

A surmise, a suspicion, flashed across his mind and filled him with uneasiness. He had heard

of cases, where the beauty of white maidens had been effective upon the hearts of the Indians; he was fearful lest this might be the reason of the Mohawk's conduct, and knowing the violence of the passions of the natives, he became alarmed lest Tasharah should claim as his, that for which he had ventured so much.

As to Kennedy, the whole fire of his jealousy had burst forth; he saw, as he imagined, a new competitor starting in the field, ready to contest with him in the race he had flattered himself to have entirely alone, and when Vernon, taking advantage of an opportunity which occurred, whispered to him his fears and suspicions, they fell like seed on fertile ground ready prepared for their reception, and in place of being negatived by Frank, were fully coincided in by him.

"That's just what I've been thinking about myself, Major," he said, "and I think the best thing we can do, will be either to knock the rascals over the head, or manage somehow to give them the slip, and both are easy enough to do."

"Frank," replied Vernon, smiling at this summary proposition of his companion, "I think that both measures are objectionable, and besides, supposing we were to entertain them for one instant, they are not practicable. If we should be compelled to attempt the first, and through any overt act of the Mohawk, be constrained to assume either the offensive or defensive, to do which I should regret, as I consider myself bound to our Indian ally, up to the present, by the strongest bonds of gratitude, it appears to me the chances and probabilities of success are more with him than with us; his force is superior to ours, and also unembarrassed; whilst we should not only have our duties to attend to, but also to see to the safety and protection of my daughter who appears latterly to have become a veritable apple of discord. With regard to your other, supposing we were to be so far fortunate as to get rid of our doubtful friends and their company, how could we find our way over the many weary miles that separate us from our home."

"It's all easy enough, Major, for you see we

have only to catch up our rifles and two of the fellows are done for; then there's only one left and I'll soon tackle him; and as to getting home, I never forget a road I've come once, and I think I know something of woodcraft, and could hit a place quite as well as an Indian or any of the best wood trampers."

"No, Frank," replied the Major, "to shed the blood of allies without their having made any demonstration of treachery, and upon mere suspicion, would both be most cowardly and base, even upon much stronger evidence than we possess of their intended foul play; nay, if we were almost assured of it, I should still hesitate as to pursuing the course you proposed. Though I do not doubt your ability and power to conduct us, yet so long as the Indian maintains his present appearance of good faith, I think it is unnecessary to avail ourselves of your observations and knowledge. Still, however, we will keep a wary and watchful eye upon Tasharah, and upon the first movement which verifies our surmises, we will act in self-defence. Let us also be as care-

ful as possible to give neither the Mohawks nor their chief, the least cause at which they may take offence."

"Very well, Major, of course you know what's best to be done, and what you've said is very right," observed Kennedy in rather a sulky and disappointed tone, for his quick manner of acting was very averse to this temporising policy, and he would much sooner have heard Vernon express a desire for his aid towards the immediate silencing of all fears and doubts by removing the object which gave rise to them.

This doctrine may appear startling to the stranger unaccustomed to the land of "Lynch Law," and where it suits much better the wishes and inclinations of the people, to hang the thief before he has stolen the horse, than to have the trouble of pursuing, catching, and executing him after it is done, all of which is considered as an unnecessary waste of time; but without being acquainted with this summary method of judgment and of execution, we consider there are very few who, placed in the same situa-

tion as Kennedy, would not have offered similar advice.

Many of the Indians had a very poor name for strictly adhering to the rules of partition. Frank was a lover, and the unusual conduct of the Mohawk rather justified the suspicions of the young man that it was the intention of the Indian to take Maria *vi et armis*, leaving to him alone the quantum of glory which the success of the enterprise shed upon its participators. This the young woodsman did not conceive to be just and did not feel inclined to put up with.

The repast being finished, Tasharah directed one of his followers to cross the river, while he commanded the other to enter into the wood. Vernon, unable to comprehend the intention with which their numbers were thus diminished, directed Kennedy to enquire it of the chief.

"When a warrior," said the young woodsman, addressing the Mohawk, "goes on the path of his enemies, he binds not his eyes. When the hunter pursues the deer, he ties not his legs. When the wolf would make war with the buffalo,

he casts not away his teeth. Wherefore does my brother send his warriors away?"

"Are the ears of my brother heavy, so that he cannot hear? and is the Mohawk like the foolish bird that flies into the mouth of the snake? Let my brother listen; for he may hear the guns of my young men; and the girl-hearted Piquots fly before them, as startled deer who see the hunter."

Kennedy immediately bent his head, and listened; but his less acute senses could at first perceive nothing. He was on the point of expressing to the Indian, his doubts concerning the former's statement, when a gentle breeze brought the sound of firing to his ears; but so feebly and indistinctly, that unless he had been exerting his organs to the utmost, it would never have attracted his attention.

Having signified to the chief that he had discovered these sounds of distant battle, he proceeded to enquire of him, on what account he had so diminished their party, as to render their assistance to their friends, or resistance to their

enemies, alike useless and unavailing; and also, wherefore, since friends, and in force, were thus in their vicinity, did he not, as the sun was high, and day at its meridian, seek to join himself to them, and thus place himself, and those who accompanied him, in security.

To these questions, Tasharah replied, in longer and more explicit terms, than is customary for his taciturn people to indulge in; and from this, Kennedy was enabled to communicate to the Major the following:

That the contest now proceeding was between the Piquots and the party of Mohawks who were mentioned before as being directed to follow. The reason they had thus encountered each other was, that Laborde, fearful of being pursued, and an attempt having been made to rescue his prisoner, had purposely remained behind with the greater portion of his force, intending to oppose the advance of any pursuers; never reckoning upon having to check a foe considerably more numerous than himself. Considering he would be successful in thus retarding

the advance of his enemies, he hoped to gain sufficient time to allow of Maria's being conveyed to where he might smile at all such endeavours; overlooking the possibility of his being headed, which had occurred. Tasharah considered it would be most hazardous to cross over immediately, and seek to join their own party, since the main body of Piquots blocked up the direct path; and thus, should a junction be attempted, almost certain captivity or death menaced them; but still, if the Indian who had crossed should pronounce it as being at all practicable, an effort should be made. The other, who had entered the wood, had done so from a design to discover that no tracking foes had got upon their path; "and Major," Kennedy continued, "Tasharah intends, if we can, to get over to-night; but if we cannot, why we'll camp where we are. So if any of the rascals come over to this side, we can cut to the other, and if they come on the other, we're all right."

Minutes, and even hours, passed, without bringing either of the two scouts: and not alone

did both Frank and the Major begin to experience uneasiness, but even Tasharah himself, by the searching glances he directed at times towards the water, or the surrounding thicket, as some ripple in the former, or gentle rustle in the latter, caught his quick ear, and excited his ever ready watchfulness, betrayed that some portion of anxiety was concealed beneath his mask of indifference.

The situation of the party at present was as follows: Vernon and his daughter were seated upon the turf, and had, at about twenty paces distant, the stream upon their left. Within a few yards of these, Kennedy reclined in a listless attitude, half lying, half sitting; and about two score of yards from the last, upon the body of a fallen pine, his head upon his hands, and resting his elbows on his knees, was seated Tasharah, apparently perfectly abstracted, excepting when some unusual sound drew his attention to the spot whence it proceeded. Let us examine upon what he is meditating: Are his thoughts occupied with scenes of battle, of dan-

ger, and of torture, of the chase, or of vengeance upon his foes? Is he solacing himself with recollections of his home, and of some dark-eyed maiden of his tribe, she whose gentle fingers traced the embroidery upon his belt? No! it is none of these, they are all near forgotten, or fled from his mind—his entire soul is centred in what he at present regards. Watch his eye, and then say if the fowler views, with more of absorbing interest his prey, whilst it is yet cleaving the space of air, marking every movement as it approaches or recedes from his snare, with one half the interest, that the Mohawk regards the fairy being who has excited within him so new and powerful an emotion. With what attention does he listen to every tone of her sweet and silvery voice; and when playfully she had formed a crown of the wild flowers which bloomed around, and laughing had placed them in her hair, he thought he beheld one of those beauteous spirits, whom he had heard spoken of in the traditions of his tribe: and, as he gazed, each moment did he feel his quickening blood flow swifter through

his veins, and with each breath he drew in more of the exciting passion.

"How perfectly still and silent, father, Tasharah appears to be. I could hardly imagine him now, to be the same as the chief who this morning led us so untiringly and unerringly. I have heard, however, of the renown the native warriors possess for apathy, and perhaps, under the Mohawk's seeming unconcern, may be concealed some desperate project of war and battle."

"I think after all, Maria, that I shall call you a bird of ill omen; since, unintentionally, you have strangely echoed the sentiments of my own breast. But what can be delaying our scouts? Frank, what do you suppose can be the reason? The day is nearly gone, and there is not the least promise of a speedy return of the Mohawks."

"Why you see, Major," replied Kennedy, not at all sorry at this opportunity to make a display of his knowledge before Maria, "that the thieving Piquots and Frenchman, have to do with a tough party of the Mohawks, and I dare

say they're all in a precious hurry to put the river behind them, but I think they'll be scattered long before ever the water runs over their trail, and then, if they are, we must look sharp out, or we may have some of them coming across us, for a beaten Indian is worse than a hungry wolf, he gets so wild and savage. So if the Mohawks have met them they're scalped by this, and there's no chance of their coming back, but a very good one of our getting a peppering when we're not thinking of it."

"You told me some time since," said the Major, "that you could distinguish the sound of battle; can you do so at present, for it would be some assistance towards forming an opinion of the relative position of the two parties, and might aid us to form some judgment of how the affairs proceed?"

Agreeably to this request, Kennedy arose, and proceeding to the bank, listened attentively, but was entirely unable to discover any signs of the neighbourhood of friends. Unwilling only to rely upon the testimony of his own organs, he

addressed Tasharah for the purpose of availing himself of the latter's quicker and more certain perceptions.

"The Piquot is a deer, he trembles at the war-whoop; he is afraid to look upon a warrior painted for battle; has the fire-water of the white man made him fight, or seeks he the water as the elk when the wild cat is sucking its blood? I hear not the voice of their thunders."

"The Mohawks," replied the chief proudly, "never see but the backs of their foes; let my brother place his hand upon the honey pot, and say if the flies will stay; the Piquots are fled to the water."

Frank having communicated this to Vernon, the latter said,

"Frank, I wish you would enquire of Tasharah, which way he considers the enemy to have fled, and for what reason does he conceive his own tribe to have been victorious; for Indians have so much national vanity, that one requires to be very explicitly informed to judge concerning them with anything like correctness."

Kennedy explained the Major's question to Tasharah, the latter replied pointing to the North East,

"The cold wind, and the wind of the rising sun would blow in the faces of the Piquots, and cannot a warrior tell the guns of his braves; a Mohawk will never fly, but my ears tell me red men have turned away to-day. Heard not my brother how the battle became distant, as when the great serpent hisses, and his voice afar off, is weak and faint, and as the cry of a babe that is young?"

"My brother is a wise chief and his words sound well; they are as meat to the hungry hunter," replied Kennedy, who having made this compliment, returned to the old officer.

"It seems, Major, the Piquots are running for the ford we left this morning, for Tasharah says the sound of the fight has been edging off that way. He says too, it must be the Frenchman who is making a cut of it, because the Mohawks, if they get the worst of it, would have

no right to get off there; and I think it likely enough, since there's better than forty of the Iroquois, and can't be twenty of the others."

"Your words," replied Vernon, "certainly convey most pleasing information; and, since you place so much reliance upon its accuracy, I suppose I must also give it credit, though it appears to me to have no better voucher than that most uncertain and fickle of all things, the wind. What say you, Maria, to this intelligence? Do you not feel rejoiced at the prospect of a speedy return home?"

"Of course," said Maria, smiling, "I feel pleased, and rejoiced at the success which has attended our arms; for, since I have been so much engaged in war, and fighting, I think it is but just that I assume the language of a soldier, though the character is denied me. I must, however, say, that I have no desire to quit these grand forests, and the constant presence of nature clothed in all her beauty, and exchange her grandeur, for the cares and troubles of domestic

arrangements. To complete my satisfaction, I wish you would recount one of those tales of which I know you have so full a store."

"Perhaps Frank might," replied Vernon; "but as regards myself, I shall be unable to comply; and I would have considered our situation sufficient to have satisfied a craving after novelty as vast as your own. It does not seem, though, to have had that effect." Then repeating Maria's wish to Kennedy, he requested him to comply with it.

"Why, Major," said the young woodsman, "I should like to do anything I could for Miss Vernon; and you see, I know plenty of tales; but they're all about the Indians. I could tell something about the Piquots, the Iroquois, the Marragansetts who had that island by the sea, or about the Illinois who've got so much the worse for fighting against Tasharah's people; but you see I'm afraid I shall be making a mess of it, and won't speak so well as you do when you tell yours."

"Be assured, Maria will make no objection to your tale on account of your language; and will rather prefer your recital to any I could give her, as she will know yours is not one of fiction."

"Well, if Miss Vernon won't mind my manner of speaking—for you see, Major, it's a long time since I was at school, and I wasn't there for long, so have forgot all my book-learning—I don't care about telling her something. If she'll say what she'd like, I'll do my best to oblige her."

"I feel certain," said Maria, "that you could tell me a very excellent one, and that there will be no necessity for excuses. Perhaps some passage in the life of yonder chief—who, from his bearing, I doubt not has performed actions which are worthy of being commemorated—might be interesting."

"I also will join in the same request," observed the Major; "for I believe there is some mystery attached to his birth. Perhaps you are acquainted with some of the many rumours which prevail; and, as frequently one of the hun-

dred tongues is right, I would feel obliged by your recounting one."

Although Kennedy could have wished that any other chief had been chosen for him to exert his powers as a historian upon, yet, as from the particular manner in which it was required of him, he could not refuse, he proceeded to com mence his tale.

CHAPTER II.

No bitter word dictates her aching breast,
And still by her he's loved, and still he's blest,
In him she views all cause of joy and woe,
And save in him she can no sorrows know.

But vain's her love, he spurns her soft caress,
And hates her for her very gentleness,
Scorns her when weeping, taunts her when she smiles;
And at her love and grief alike reviles.

No murmur 'scap'd her, for she lov'd too well,
Her anguish into any ear to tell,
Her heartstrings broke, and once alone she sigh'd,
To part for e'er from him, and then she died.

"You know Mr. Neil, Major, who lives so alone by himself, with only a few blacks and niggers to look after his farm? Well, he lived there, as I've been told, just in the same way, long before you ever came to that part of the country; now they say he's the father of Tasharah, and he doesn't

like to own him because he had a bit of a row with the mother, and this is the way I've heard the tale told.

"About some five and thirty years ago, he got into a mess about some king on the other side of the water, and though he'd plenty of rich friends, he was glad enough to come over here as quick as he could. Well, being a young man, with plenty of money, he couldn't set quietly down to a farm, but ran wild all about the country, and having nothing to do with any one but Indians, he got at last so thick with the Mohawks, that he always went with them to their hunts and to their fights. Well, once he was obliged to go to the settlements, so he took with him a young Mohawk, who had already got a good name as being a brave, and had some scalps drying in his wigwam.

"After they'd set off they managed to come upon some ambush, and the young Indian was killed, but Neil got safe off and came back to the Mohawk village, where he told how the cunning Piquots had served the other. Now the father

of the Mohawk, when his son was killed, was, as an Indian would say, a withered tree without a single shoot, and as Neil was thought to be a fine young fellow, he 'dopted him, and soon after that he married the daughter of one of the head chiefs, and became a regular Indian, and was all right and happy.

"Presently some jawer came down and talked to him about how much more respectable he would have been if he'd settled down as a quiet farmer, than have disgraced himself and his family by turning red Indian, and painting himself; which I don't exactly see, for I'd just as soon be an Indian chief as anything else; but others don't seem to think the same as me, and I suppose I am wrong because I haven't learnt much. Well, just upon this fellow's nonsense, he got a letter from England, which rowed him preciously, and told him to leave the Mohawks and not to be Indian any more; and I don't understand this either, for they'd been kind to him, when the other white men would ha' killed him, if they could only have caught him.

"Now, partly from what his father said, and partly because he was tired of the thing, he left the Indians and his wife and went and took the house upon the hill, and this was about autumn time and he'd such a lot to do, though he did have a couple of helps, in clearing the stumps and stones from a patch, that he was 'bligèd to work quite hard himself, and so he couldn't answer his father's letter, for the two reasons, that he hadn't time to write, and then he could not spare any one to take it to the agents. Then when the snow set in he was just as busy burning and firing, and couldn't do it any more. Well, one evening a letter was brought to him from his father, and the old gentleman, who fancied because Neil hadn't written that he wasn't going to do as he wished, called him plenty of hard names and said he was going to die, and he'd leave all his property to another son.

"Whilst Neil was reading this, who should come in but his Indian squaw, as if she'd come on purpose to take her own part, and see what had been said against her. Now, as he warn't

in the very best temper, seeing his father had gone off in such a passion with him, Neil got mighty cross with her for coming, and one word brought on another until he told her to be off; but women are sometimes pretty obstinate, begging your pardon, Miss Vernon, and she told him she wouldn't stir. Then this put him into a downright rage, and he pushed her out of the room, and told the helps to put her out of the house, although it was bitter cold, and snowing away prodigious fast; for you see he was too proud to sit in the same room as his two helpers though he didn't mind working with them when there was anything to be done. Well, as they didn't think him earnest in what he said, and fancied he only wanted to frighten the woman, so she mightn't trouble him, they just took her into their own room, and gave her something to eat, and some warm milk for her little papoose, for she had brought her baby with her. After a little, whilst she was feeding it, it began to cry, and made so much noise that Neil heard it, and came out from his room in a great rage, and

rowed away at his men for letting his wife stay, when he had ordered them to turn her out, and then he told the men to open the door and do it at once. Well, as they didn't like to do the thing, they told him so, and he got still more cross when he heard them say it, and then he said he'd do it himself, and turned round to the woman and told her to be off; but she didn't think he could be in earnest, and so kept looking at her baby.

"'There,' said Neil, taking hold of it and flinging it out of the door, 'don't think I want to keep the brat.' As soon as his squaw saw what he'd done, she gave a screech and ran out after the baby, and he shut the door in a moment and bolted it upon her. When he'd done this, he said to the two men, I won't say exactly, Miss, what he did say, for he out with a tremendous oath, 'now if either of you dares to have anything to do with that woman, or interfere with my concerns more than I engaged him for, by—' and here he swore—'I'll serve him just the same.'

"Well! you may guess pretty well, though he spoke very fierce, he didn't scare either of them; and as soon as he was gone, they opened the door, and there was the woman, with the baby in its cradle on her lap; and though it was bitter cold, she'd thrown off her sheep-skin dress, and sat shivering at the door, moaning, and singing in a low voice, as though she'd been a warrior singing his death-song. So they spoke to her, and tried to get her to come in; but, though they spoke in her own language, she didn't seem to know what they were saying. Then they tried to take the baby away from her, thinking she'd be sure to come then; but they couldn't, for she held it a good deal too tight. So when they found she couldn't or wouldn't understand them, and as they were cold, and tired of talking, they threw some clothes over her, and went into the house; and they were only in time, for Neil, just as they shut the door, came out, and asked them if they'd been talking to her; and though they weren't afraid for themselves, for you see they were two, and he was only

one, yet they thought, if they told the truth, it would only be making him more cruel to her, and so they said they hadn't.

"After this, they went out once or twice, to see how she got on, and though they gave her clothes she always threw them off; and the last time they went she seemed to have fallen asleep, so they put the clothes over her again; but when they went in the morning they found the poor thing was dead, and, what was more curious, the baby was alive. For, when it had been flung out by the father, it fell into a fresh snow-wreath, and the basket and the clothes—you know, Miss, how the squaws wrap their babies up—had kept it from being hurt, and nice and warm.

"When they told Neil his wife was dead, he got into a most dreadful passion with them for bothering him about her; but when he saw her himself, he began to be very sorry for what he had done, and asked if they knew where the baby was; but they said no, for they fancied his being sorry was all pretence, and that he only wanted

to get rid of it, so they let it be where it was all safe in an outbuilding. When they saw, though, he was really sorry—for he began to swear because he had lost all his family in one day, and to call them cowards for letting him turn a poor woman, and her baby, out of doors—they went and fetched it; and he seemed right well pleased it wasn't dead, and gave it something to eat himself. Then he'd the woman brought in, and laid out decently, and took a spade, and dug a grave himself, just by the door, for he wouldn't let any one help him, and there he buried her.

"Now, when he'd killed the mother, he seemed to come all over mighty fond of the baby, and took great care of it, and minded it himself all the winter; and, in the spring, he sent away his two men, and took the youngster himself among the Indians, and left it with the Mohawks; and, when he came back again, he bought some niggers; and there he lives, scarce ever seeing a white face: and Tasharah there is the baby; and I never heard say that his father has put eyes upon him from that day to this. That's all I

know, Major," Kennedy continued, "unless Miss Vernon would like to hear something about his fighting."

" I really think," said the Major, " there was no necessity for the excuses you made at the beginning; and I congratulate you upon having told your tale exceedingly well. Maria, I think I may also say for you, if I may judge from the attention you have paid, that Frank's tale has decidedly interested you."

To the joy of Kennedy, Maria answered in the affirmative, and also thanked him for the ready manner in which he had complied with her request. Whilst she was speaking, the whole party of whites were startled by the rapid and noiseless motion of an Indian who passed them from the forest; and whom Kennedy recognised as being the scout who had been sent in that direction. He proceeded directly to his chief, and delivered his information; and from the earnest gesticulation which accompanied his narration, he seemed to infer that there was danger. On a motion from Tasharah, Kennedy advanced to him, and

the former informed the young woodsman, that the Piquots, being overpowered, had retreated to the ford; and a portion, having crossed over, had discovered their trail, and were following it up with the hopes of avenging, in some part, their defeat of the morning.

"When the larcajon has fixed on the elk, the cunning beast will take to the water," replied Kennedy. "The Piquot is a larcajon, shall he leap on our backs? We are elks—the Piquot will not go on the water."

"My brother speaks well," said the Chief; and whilst Kennedy returned to the Major, the Mohawks had hastily unmoored their small raft. Maria Vernon, and the rifles, were already on board; Kennedy and the Indians were preparing to swim; when further operations were, for the moment, suspended, by the report of a rifle which came from the opposite bank. Warily and quickly Tasharah concealed his party, until he discovered it proceeded from the other Mohawk, who presently swam over, having a bloody trophy attached to his belt. A few words served to ex-

plain that many of the Piquots being scattered, it would be a service of danger to think as yet of rejoining their friends. On this information the chief at once changed the route he had intended to pursue, determining to drop down the stream for about a mile, and then, if possible, conceal his party until the next day, trusting his enemies would pursue across the river, or up the current, as it would not appear probable to them that he would descend; and thus approach the ford which would rather seem as the very point he would desire to avoid, being a position most likely to be in their power, and it would also be a partial retracing of his steps of the morning.

Hoping thus to mislead their foe, and relying on their own resources and manhood, in case of necessity, the Indians and Kennedy plunged into the water, one of the Mohawks having the guidance of the rude vessel committed to him, and the others swimming around, ready to render assistance should it be required. The contemplated distance was speedily passed, and a land-

ing effected in a small natural cavern which revealed itself in the bank, and which was shielded from above by a quantity of bush; but rather exposed to view from the opposite side of the river. As the water, however, flowed into it for a considerable distance, and the interior was excessively dark, it seemed to offer every convenience for concealment. The raft being drawn within this recess, a quantity of leaves were collected, and spread, which formed not incommodious couches for weary travellers. After a small meal of dried meat and parched corn, which hunger alone could render palatable, Vernon, Maria, and Kennedy retired to their respective beds, and sought to snatch a hasty repose.

Contrary to the usual Indian custom, which to so watchful and vigilant a people seems extraordinary—for the natives, during their night halts, entirely neglect the precaution of fixing sentries to guard against surprise, trusting themselves implicitly to the protection of their Manitons, or guardian spirits—Tasharah placed one of his Mohawks upon the bank to give warn-

ing should any danger approach. Having regulated the signals, the Chief returned to the cavern; where, in the short space of time that had intervened since his departure, he found that all his white associates had sunk into oblivion, as far as what regards the visible world, and were already, if their slumber permitted it, fast reveling in one of their own creation.

Seating himself upon the ground, in the very back part of the cave, as though he desired to be private, the Chief soon appeared lost in thought. Various and contradictory are the expressions of his countenance: for giving himself up entirely to the influence of his soul, each passion appeared as it brought its own peculiar muscles into play. The darkness he knew would conceal him from his countryman, and all the others slept. First, the knitted brow, the compressed lips, and swelling nostril, told of complexed thought. A glance towards Maria, who lay sleeping, confidently as innocence—a silver moonbeam entering at the cavern's mouth had wandered, type of beauty, o'er the lovely maid—one

of whose arms, half hid by her dark flowing hair, served her as a pillow—aud resting upon her pouting lips, seemed as though it inhaled from thence its own sweet purity—his countenance had changed: the smooth brow, the dilated eye, and extension of the mouth, from which all harshness had fled, and admiration rules him. The lips now grow tighter; the eye-lid fell; the brow became slightly elevated, and his breathing scarcely audible: desire to possess the beauteous object is now his wish. The brow became frowning and lowering; his eye-balls gleam, and appear starting; the jaw-bone protrudes, from the firmness with which his mouth is closed; his breathing loud, uneven, and unsteady; and his one hand clenched his knife: the foul fiend tempted him to a deed of blood. But now the proud glance of his eye, and the scornful smile upon the corners of his mouth, tell, that his better angel has hurried to the rescue of his honour; and, hark! he mutters half aloud—"The eagle spares the dove, that is chased by the hawk, and flies for safety to his home. Shall a Mohawk

warrior be as a thieving Piquot, who slays his friend in the dark?"

Just at the moment that these words, so creditable to the Chief, had escaped him, in his half muttered soliloquy, the hoarse cry of the bull-frog, arising upon the quiet of the night, awoke him from his reverie, and roused him into action. Leaning his body forwards, with dilated eyes and nostrils, he listened. A second time the croakings of the animal—which would have caused any one, unacquainted with its meaning, had his attention been drawn to it, merely to have cursed it for disturbing him at such a time—seemed to incite the Indian to avail himself of the acuteness of every organ. Crawling on his hands and knees, he approached, as nearly as possible, to the entrance of the cave. Here he rested, each sense absorbed, and riveted to aid his quick and subtle hearing. Again did those harsh notes sound. The Chief is satisfied—he starts to his feet, his hand to his girdle assures him that his trusty weapon is in readiness—he needs it, for the hour of danger is at hand.

Thrice have those warning notes arisen not unheeded on the midnight air. Strife and contest shake their wings—death smiles, and the grim wolf howls forth his invitation to the promised banquet and feast of blood.

Quickly awakening his companions, and having explained to them the necessity to be upon the alert, the Chief caused Maria and the firearms to be once again placed upon the raft. Vernon refusing, as soon as he heard that danger menaced, to form part of its freight: and though both the Indian and Kennedy strove to dissuade him from this resolution, it was in vain, and he, rather impatiently, replied to the latter—

"It would be excusable in you, Frank, young as you are, to place a value upon life; and to do so, before you have experienced the bitter truth, that more thorns than flowers beset the path. But it would be shameful in me, because danger is near, to betray my king and country, by fleeing before my enemies; and therefore am I determined to remain at what is evidently my post. Should any thing occur to me, I leave my

daughter to your and Tasharah's joint protection, until your arrival in the settlements, when I trust that you, Kennedy, will see her in safety to York."

"That I'll do," Kennedy replied, "and if you don't like, Major, what I said, why I'm sorry that I said it; you see I thought if any harm was to come to you, if the Piquots were to get your scalp, they shall never make a pris'ner of you if I'm alive, that Miss Maria—"

Before he could finish his sentence the sudden alarm of the owl was heard, and almost before the small raft on which Maria was placed, could be pushed into the stream, and committed to the care of a Mohawk to be conveyed to the opposite side, the war whoop of the Piquots sounded its discordant notes.

The Mohawks returned the cry of their nation, and Tasharah springing up the bank towards his foes, midway encountered an enemy. They seized each other, and struggling, rolled together into the water. After a short contest, the Mohawk remained the conqueror, and then plung-

ing into the stream, swam rapidly to the opposite shore.

Kennedy had already dispatched one foe, and at the same moment as his knife drank the blood of a second, he received a blow upon his head, dealt by a Piquot from behind, which tumbled him senseless down the bank, where he fortunately fell into shallow water.

His fall, however, was not unavenged, Vernon, who had observed him struck, levelled a pistol at the Piquot, and revenged the act; but this effort for his young friend proved fatal to himself. The attention of the Indians became drawn entirely upon him, he was surrounded, his weapons wrested from him, and he saw himself in the hands of his enemies a defenceless prisoner.

CHAPTER III.

Manitons, spirits of the air;
Manitons of earth's caverns drear;
Manitons of the boundless lake;
To hear our pledge, awake! awake!

Be witness—for we swear by thee,
By each power of earth, air, and sea,
That we in friendship give our hand,
Unto these strangers of our land.

We know not now, nor act, nor deed,
By which ye made our fathers bleed,
From mem'ry's leaf it all hath flown,
We know that we are friends alone.

If we prove false, dread spirits then,
Arise from ev'ry cave and glen,
Destroy our tribes, and let no more,
Our foes avoid us in the war.

On the banks of a stream sits a fair and beauteous maid, her silken hair floats in disorder to the wind, as though to correspond with the wildness of nature that surrounds her. But

wherefore is she here? how comes it that so lovely and so rare a flower thus finds itself far from its native soil? Were danger nigh, from the savage panther, or still more savage man, is there none whose jealous arm would be ready to shield this stranger?

And who is yonder son of the forest, with the eagle plume? By his dress and bearing, he is of the brave and warlike nation of the Iroquois; of the bold and fearless tribe of the Mohawks. He is Tasharah, the most dauntless of the braves of the Mengove.

Motionless he leans against a tree, whose strong and hardy stem bows to the winter wind no more than throbs his heart with fear at the yells of his cunning enemies the Piquots, and he loves the daughter of the white man, as a warrior loves the face of his foe.

Then the white flower spoke to the strong arm of the Mohawks, and her voice was as the sighing of the south wind, and as when the dead warrior calls from the happy land, to the friend he has left behind.

"Did you not tell me, Tasharah, my father had escaped? If he has, how is it that he is not here? Your countryman has long been absent. Oh! tell me the truth, even if you let me know the worst."

"And does the fair flower of the white men look clouded upon Tasharah; and does she think he has sung in her ears as a lying Piquot? The leaping panther is a warrior," he continued with pride, "and the scalps of many enemies dry in his wigwam." Here he pointed to a fresh and bloody object hanging to his breast, and which Maria regarded with a shudder. "If the white-headed warrior has escaped, the daughter shall see her father before the sun falls into the distant lake."

The eyes of the Indian had been riveted on Maria whilst he spoke, and conveyed a language that a woman is never slow in translating. She felt grieved she had hurt, whilst she admired his sensitive feelings. She cast her eyes upon the ground, and would have recalled her words. A strange emotion, composed of joy and of regret,

filled her bosom. She could, equally, have smiled or wept.

The Indian still continued to gaze upon her, who appeared to him to be almost celestial, when some distant sound caught his ear. Placing himself upon the ground, he listened, and then, rising, said,

"There is the sound of the fall of a mocassin of a red man, and of a white man; but the Yengese is young, and the old man is not there."

Maria, who had been industriously engaged plucking a flower, and then tearing it in pieces, had now all her embarrassment banished by the anxiety she conceived respecting her parent: and addressing the Indian, she said,

"Are you quite positive? May you not be deceived? One you say is a white man; perhaps this may be my father. Oh! give me hopes, nor tell me that I am so soon an orphan."

"The tread of the one," replied Tasharah, after he had again listened, "is the fall of the mocassin of a red man of the Mohawks, and the other is of the young Yengese. His foot is too

strong for the white head, and he talks in the Indian tongue, quick and angry."

"And how can you tell at such a distance, the difference of a footfall; or know that they who are coming hither are speaking in a particular language?" enquired Maria, who hoped that what the Indian had advanced was erroneous, and that she might elicit something to confirm this opinion.

"Cannot the white man tell where his thunder will burst, and knows not the eagle its home? Does not a warrior know the tread of his people? The Mohawk speaks not as a Piquot, nor the Piquot as a Huron. Nor tread the Iroquois of the woods as the men of the lakes."

"I do not pretend to doubt," replied Maria, now breathing more freely, as she conceived the Indian had avoided her question, "that you might be able to tell who they are who approach, if you were nearer to them; but I think you may be mistaken by the distance."

"The ears of Tasharah are not dull," said the Indian, proudly; "for he can hear the fish that

swim in the deep water. The strangers come; and then let the fair maiden say if Tasharah has told her a lie?"

Maria turned her head in the direction indicated by the Mohawk, and beheld the verification of his words in the approach of an Indian and Kennedy, the latter having his head bloody, and his clothes saturated with water. At the sight of Maria, the young woodsman became confused. Nor did he appear more at ease, when with every eagerness she enquired of him what had become of her father.

"Why, Miss," he replied, with much dejection, "you see I got knocked myself over the head, and so I can't tell very well what they did with the Major; but the red-skin here says, the Frenchman and his people have got him prisoner along with a Mohawk; and so we've a chance of getting him again, as we did yourself."

Maria heeded not this attempt at exculpation; nor the rather mischievous manner in which Kennedy sought to bring the Indians forward, and make part of the burden of the blame fall

upon their shoulders. Her soul was employed upon somewhat else; and was being strung to a high resolve. With a sparkling eye, and a slight flush reddening her cheek, she turned to the young borderer, and said—

"I know not, whether this be a tale by which you are seeking to conceal your cowardice in deserting one, whom, only last night, you promised should not fall into his enemies' hands. If it is so, I, though a woman, will teach you a more manly part: and will myself join in the pursuit, and in the attempt to rescue my father, who so lately adventured himself for me. Prepare! I would that our departure be immediate; though, if you prefer it, you may remain behind."

Surprised at the energy so suddenly assumed by Maria, and overwhelmed by her accusation, the honest borderer stood as though he'd been of the famous feast, and with his host had been transformed to stone. Presently, recovering, he comprehended that it was her design to join in the attempt for her father's rescue: and he, re-

membering his promise to Vernon--of seeing the daughter of the latter, in safety, to the settlements—replied, with the intention of dissuading her—

"Why, Miss Vernon, the Indians here will see nothing goes wrong with him: and if the Frenchman dares to let his rascal Piquots kill him, they'll make, before long, both them and him, sorry for it. But you see, before the last fight began, the Major said to me, 'I leave my daughter,' that's you, Miss, 'to your protection,' that's me, 'to see her in safety to York.' Those I think were his words, and so"—

"Not exactly," observed Maria, interrupting him. "I believe, my father also gave me another guardian in the person of Tasharah; and therefore, if you have any fear, I do not desire to compel you to accompany us, and will directly release you from the obligation of your promise. You can depart if it pleases you. Have you anything else to say?"

"Why, Miss," replied Kennedy, whose passion had been excited by Maria's insinuation, together

with the feverish irritation produced by his wound, and by his jealousy, for he imagined that Tasharah's attentions were more readily accepted than his own, "your father did say something about the Indian, but he never meant you should wait till he's ready, for that wouldn't be till he'd handled half the scalps of the Piquot nation, and then he'd be for the rest. I dare say Tasharah will say with me, it's no use going to look after the Major, and I can see you by myself as safe to York, as if there was fifty redskins with us."

"You have heard," said Maria, "what my resolution is, and I am determined to adhere to it; with regard to yourself, I have neither the power nor wish to compel you to accompany me against your inclination, but I shall certainly proceed, even if I set forth alone, and will endeavour, trusting in that power that never deserts those who rely upon it, to make my way to our enemy's home, and on my knees will beg him to spare my father from the fate you cannot deny menaces him; I doubt not yonder Mohawk will point

me out the way, and you may join him if you will."

In vain Kennedy strove to turn Maria from her resolution, the more he argued but the firmer she became, and as a last resource he appealed to Tasharah.

"If the fair maiden would follow on the path of the warriors, let her," replied the Mohawk, who admired the determined character of Maria, as it appeared to him to be unusual; Indian women being, with few exceptions, timid and submissive.

Finding himself obliged to concede his point, Kennedy requested Maria to allow him to form one of the party, accompanying his petition with such an earnest asseveration that it had been entirely out of his power to hinder the capture of the Major, that she, regretting the severity of her words, willingly accepted his excuses and accorded his request.

Tasharah, feeling convinced from the information he received through his countryman, that both the Major and the other Mohawk were pri-

soners in the hands of the Piquots, and considering any attempt for their liberation with his present numbers would be but a useless exposure, and in all probability sacrifice of life, without in any means advancing the real intentions of his party, proposed to seek a junction with the victorious warriors of his nation.

To this the young woodsman immediately assented, as he considered forty or fifty rifles, backed by Indian cunning, to be far more powerful arguments than any Maria could advance; and again, that if Laborde could obtain possession of the daughter, it would cause but small advancement towards the recovery of the father.

Some few arrangements having been completed, the party proceeded swiftly and cautiously upon their journey, carefully examining for any marks to guide them as to the position of their friends, or to direct them to avoid too close a proximity to their foes.

The reason for the latter conduct, so contrary to that generally pursued by an Indian towards

his conquered and vanquished enemy, arose from the presence of Maria, on whose account both Kennedy and Tasharah were desirous of avoiding an encounter, as it might expose her to danger.

The probability of meeting an opponent was considerably reduced from what it was on the preceding day, for all those who had been scattered would most likely have crossed the river during the night, and if any did remain, they must be in such small parties, that they would rather avoid than seek a contest; yet not being desirous to trust anything to chance, Tasharah in advance, and his countryman in the rear, were prepared to give timely warning. They had gained a lofty knoll with the hopes of obtaining a better view, when the chief, waving his hand, beckoned the party to halt, and then proceeding with the gliding pace of his people, was soon lost to sight among the forest growth.

After an absence of about an hour, at the duration of which Kennedy complained in rather bitter terms, the Mohawk returned, and to the questions of Frank replied,

"Tasharah has spoken in the ears of his people, and said, 'A white head of the Yengese, and the leaping panther of the Mohawks slept, when a liar and a coward came and leapt upon them, and now he says, I will have the scalp of a Yengese and of a Mohawk, and will see my enemies cry like women in the fire.' Then Tasharah said, 'shall this be so?' and the warriors said, 'no!' Then the wise chief spoke again, 'there is a turtle dove of the white man, and she is the only shoot of the grey-headed warrior, and has the heart of an eagle; she has said, I will go and take my father from among women, I am a woman and can raise the hatchet against a nation of girls; but she knows not the way, she will be faint, she has no bow and will be weak and hungry; she knows not the springs of running water and will be thirsty. Men of the Mohawks, shall she go alone?' and they said, 'bid her, she is welcome.'"

Frank now turned round to Maria, and commenced translating, rather concisely, the Mohawk's words, and he felt considerable gratifica-

tion at being able thus early in the journey, to be of service.

"He means, Miss Maria, with all his long speech, that he's found out the party we were looking after, and has told them all about the Major and you, and they say they don't mind doing the kindness for you of hitting a blow for him, so long as they've the chance of fingering a few scalps;" and Kennedy conceived he had struck a severe blow, by his sarcasm, at the offer of the Mohawks.

Maria, having expressed her happiness at this successful termination of the suit of her ambassador, desired that no time should be lost, and agreeably to her wish, the party were again in motion, and after a march of about a quarter of a mile, a curious scene broke upon their view. It was an Indian encampment of nigh forty warriors, some of whom were binding and dressing their wounds, some smoking, some examining and repairing their weapons, some were preparing a meal, and a few of the older were discussing the topic of the new enterprize. They were

all habited nearly alike, with a piece of coloured cloth around their loins, and with leggings and mocassins, whilst each had his cheeks, arms, and breast smeared with red paint.

As soon as their friends were perceived, Tasharah caused the whites to halt, whilst one of the oldest members of the band advanced towards Kennedy, proffering the calumet of peace, from which he took himself three preparatory whiffs, the smoke of which he exhaled first towards the heavens, then towards the earth, and finally towards the four quarters.

It was now presented to Kennedy, who drew in and swallowed the quantum of smoke prescribed by rules of Indian etiquette and good breeding. Maria, being a woman, was of course exempted from an act so altogether *à la mode Espagnole*, as that of smoking a pipe whose length might be computed at about three feet.

This ceremony and signal of the ratification of peace and goodwill, is never, or very rarely, violated by the savage; and it had been considered necessary, as all the Indians present were not

Mohawks, since many were from the other tribes of the Iroquois, some of whom had been neutral until the present war, and others even in direct opposition to the English.

The policy and conduct of the Mengwe was most vacillating. Situated between the two great rival states, they strove to maintain an equilibrium between the parties, and were thus at times to be seen marching with their Canadian allies, and at others amongst the ranks of the British.

Hence—as it was probable that cause of enmity might lurk between some of the parties thus brought together—had the pledge of faith been considered necessary to remove all such impressions; as at its performance, the Great Spirit, and the Manitons of the Earth and Air, are supposed to be invoked, and to become both present at, and witnesses to, the making of the compact. as also the pledges of its fulfilment; by it is indicated that the new-comers are received with every friendship, all remembrance of injuries is mutually obliterated, and if either party trea-

cherously breaks the covenant, he entails upon himself, kindred and tribe, the vengeance and wrath of the imaginary beings who were present at its formation.

This ceremony having been performed, the strangers were invited to another, equally necessary, and rather more agreeable in the opinion of Kennedy, and at which some venison, and Indian corn, formed a meal not at all disagreeable to travellers whose olfactory nerves had not been near so well saluted for upwards of eighteen hours, and whose appetites were of the most masticatory quality.

All things have an end, and so even may an Indian hunter become satisfied, and compelled to acknowledge he has laid in sufficient to sustain, without much inconvenience, several days' fasting. The Mohawks at last prepared for their departure in search of their enemy, and to pursue him, should it be necessary, to his very home, and to stain his hearth with the blood of vengeance.

A kind of litter had been prepared for Maria,

by the care of the silent but attentive chief, who seemed to have lost entirely the ferocity of an Indian whenever he was in her presence; and apparently either forgot, or was quite careless about maintaining, even a semblance of the contempt, every Indian considers it incumbent upon himself to assume with regard to the charms of woman.

The authority of the Mohawk had, seemingly, been admitted without question or comment, and his wild followers, arranging themselves according to his directions, were soon in the order of an Indian march. A few scouts were placed in advance and upon the rear, whilst the remainder followed in that long, straight, undeviating line, which has obtained the name of "Indian file." Maria was borne in the centre upon the litter already mentioned, and on the shoulders of four stout Iroquois. Close to it, for better protection, walked Tasharah, Kennedy, and half a dozen of the bravest warriors of the former; all of whom were ready to protect its precious contents from any danger, even at the expense

of their lives: for the beauty of Maria, and her devotion to her father, had filled the hearts of each of these untutored savages with wonder and admiration.

As may be suspected, these unequivocal symptoms of more than ordinary interest in their lovely fellow-traveller, as manifested by the Mohawk, were not observed by Frank with anything like pleasure. Already had the green-eyed monster whispered in his ear: and, so far at the present from liking the Indian, he entertained towards him the most positive hatred and aversion; and he would rather now have preferred a clear space, his rifle, and no favor, with the Mohawk Chief, than even with the Frenchman; and it was only his fears for Maria, that hindered the young woodsman from coming at once to a rupture with the Indian, whom he now regarded with all the suspicion of rivalship. Each moment added fuel to feed his rage and bitter spite upon. Every action of the Mohawk became viewed as an intended insult towards himself; and when his services were not required, as the

Indians furnished of themselves every thing Maria could desire, and was in their power to obtain, he considered this was done on purpose, with intent to lower him in the estimation of her, before whom, with all the sensitiveness of a lover, he wished to appear of importance. This conduct he determined to resent on the first convenient opportunity. Nor, on his part, did Tasharah feel better disposed towards Frank, than did the young borderer towards him. With the quick instinct of love, the former already had discovered a rival; and though his pride forbade him from being jealous of the borderer, yet the latter possessed a large portion of his contempt, which, however, was near ripening into a darker passion, from the effects of some bluff and ill-natured remarks of Frank. This, however, the Indian studiously concealed, partly from feeling himself bound by the rites of hospitality; and partly, lest its betrayal should produce consequences he did not desire Maria should be a witness to.

Swiftly the Mohawks journeyed on; and, with

a blood-hound's instinct, traced the footsteps of their foe, who had left his track both open and broad. At the fall of night, Tasharah halted for a short space of time, for the purpose of arranging the conveyance of Maria; and allowing her to obtain some small refreshment, of which she stood much in need, and then resumed his rapid pursuit.

Although the night was dark and gloomy, for the light clouds, like envious spirits, were momentarily flitting across, and obscuring the pale bright face of the silver moon; yet, with as much precision as if the sun had aided them with his light, did the Mohawks appear to discover the traces of those whom they sought, never being at fault or hesitating for one moment, and seeming rather to follow their self-destined prey by the organs of smell than by those of sight.

The morning came, and Tasharah judged that his enemies were as distant as on the preceding evening, and had used equal speed in their flight as he had in the pursuit; and, however unwilling, he was absolutely compelled to rest his

men, lest, from over fatigue, they should altogether be incapacitated from proceeding. Having fixed upon a place, the whole party received permission to snatch what repose they were able for the ensuing couple of hours. Reader! we do not mean to sleep, for that an Indian rarely requires: but to a quiet philosophical smoke, which with him comprises all the luxuries of a halt. They were not long before they availed themselves of the opportunity, and the greater part, producing their tomahawks, proceeded from thence to inhale the fragrant weed; whilst others turned to the same purpose, either a rude pipe of the country sculptured out of red stone, or small clay pipes that they had been fortunate enough to obtain from the traders in exchange for their own more valuable merchandise.

Seated upon a hillock, Maria gradually passed, from the fears that occupied her mind with regard to her father, to become interested in the scene that surrounded her. Guessing what was occupying her thoughts, Kennedy, who had imagined himself considerably diminished in impor-

tance, and actuated by another motive, advanced towards her and addressed her.

" I'm afraid, Miss, you won't be able to stand all this marching; and I think, begging your pardon, it would have been much better had you gone to the settlements, as the Major said; for you see them Indians don't understand going the tramp quietly, to oblige a young lady."

" I do not perceive that at all," she replied. " These poor people do all in their power to render my journey easy. As to the other subject," she continued smiling, " you know I have interdicted you from speaking concerning it."

" You said, Miss, you'd do as you like, and so you have. But I don't like at all the way these Indians go on. You don't know them. They're up to all sorts of devilry and deceit; and will tell you they're precious fond of you, whilst they're cutting your throat. Who knows, but with all their talk, they're not going to make an Indian squaw of you." And Kennedy watched to see what effect would be produced by his di-

plomatic oration upon Maria, but she, answering him with a smile, observed,

"I am infinitely obliged to you for the kindness of your hints, but I consider you are mistaken with regard to the intentions of the Indians, towards my poor self. You surely cannot be so foolish as to suppose, that any are unwise enough to envy me my freedom, or seek to make me, who have nothing to recommend myself more than their own black-eyed dames, a partner to their cares and troubles."

To the latter part of this address, Kennedy stared; to him, had any one but Maria used these disparaging words of herself, it would have appeared rank heresy, and have met with all the denial that two stout arms, well used, could possibly be supposed to give, to such an erroneous assertion; and there are not many upon whom they would not have had the effect of being most potent, applicable, and sensible arguments, for Kennedy in his disputes, more frequently sought to imitate the feats of a Milo, than the eloquence of a Demosthenes.

After a few minutes' consideration, he replied,

"Why, Miss, do you mean to say you're not good enough for one of these Indians, whether he's Brave, Chief, or Sagamore? Now I mean to say, there's not a man upon the border, be he who he may, but you're a sight or two too good for; and there isn't one but is ready to die for you. Why! Miss, an Indian would dance at such a chance, and I don't half like trusting that Tasharah, he's a bit too sweet as it is already."

Maria, for an instant, felt confused, the blood mounted to her countenance, and she was half inclined to be offended, but perceiving the young man was expecting a reply she said,

"You seem to have become a most accurate observer of the people we are among; but I consider in your assertion, that you give to me far more consideration than I possess, and, on that account, I feel very much inclined to imagine that your bluffness is all pretence, and that you have been making an attempt to flatter me; but

now I am upon my guard, and you will not find me henceforth believe implicitly all that you have to advance."

"Upon my word, Miss," Kennedy replied, energetically, "I mean all that I say, and much more besides; but you see that I can't say all that I think, because I can't get it out; but this I can, there isn't a prettier lady than you in all the border, or in the settlements, or in any other part of the world; and I'd like to see the man as would say there is, I'd spoil his face for him so, that he'd never have seen a prettier one than yours."

"Still more flattery! why you would make an excellent courtier;—but I really wish," Maria continued with a sigh, "that my power was as great as you represent it to be, then I might feel assured for the safety of my father."

"Why! Miss, as to that, I can only say, that one word, from you whenever you choose it, would set the whole of the border marching into the Canadas. But say, Miss," and Kennedy felt in-

spired with extraordinary courage and boldness, "but say, Miss, you'd have me, if your father was safe away from the thieving Indians, and if flesh and blood, along with a good will can do it, he shan't be with the Frenchman long."

For an instant Maria thought the required sacrifice was great, but the stake was greater, and to the surprise and immeasurable delight of Kennedy, she replied,

"I agree to it; if you deliver my father, the part you have assigned me shall be performed; if you do not, remember you will have no claim upon me."

With a shout of joy Kennedy sprang into the air, and snapped his fingers from delight. The Indians perceiving his strange conduct, vented their surprise in a guttural "ugh," but he, regardless of their wonderment, looked for the chief.

The latter had been seated at no considerable distance, apparently an unconcerned and uninterested auditor of the foregoing conversation. A slight agitation of the mouth alone, would

have informed a keen observer of the deep and engrossing attention he had paid to the words, and particularly to the last sentence of Maria.

Actuated by thrice the desire to hurry forwards than he had experienced at the commencement of the journey—since then it had been but friendship that incited him, but now something else had been cast into the scale, which rendered the balance no longer even approaching to being just—Kennedy addressed the Mohawk, and as he now imagined himself certain of the prize, he felt quite amicably disposed towards the Indian, and asked him in the most courteous and polite language when it would suit him to proceed.

But in place of giving immediate directions for marching, Tasharah merely observed,

"The sun is tired, he is slow, let my brother wait until he is over yonder branch."

Kennedy, knowing that it would be useless to expostulate, although the time first marked by the Indian had expired, and he was unable to comprehend the cause of this new delay, contented himself with observing,

"It is good."

Perceiving the Mohawk desired to be alone, and that Maria was weeping, as he did not desire to force his society upon the one, nor intrude upon the grief of the other, he proceeded to join one of the small knots of Indians who were congregated together, discussing the probabilities of the expedition, and when not engaged in delivering their own opinion, signified their assent to or disapprobation from a speaker, by the various modes in which they exhaled the fumes of the weed they smoked.

The time again passed, and the Indian did not appear more inclined to pursue his journey, and Kennedy now thought it was fully necessary to remind him of it; and then, if he did not proceed, to demand an explanation of conduct that appeared so extraordinary and suspicious. Being unable to comprehend from what motives this second delay occurred, Frank had begun to fear that some sinister design was contemplated on the part of the Mohawk. Advancing towards the Chief, who, lost in thought, had remained in

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nearly the same attitude as that in which he had been when the young woodsman had last addressed him, Kennedy said:

"The Mohawk is very slow on his journey. The sun already is looking into the waters of the distant lake. Wherefore delays the great Chief on the trail of his enemies?"

"Look!" said the Indian, starting up, and drawing his figure to its full height. "Does the eagle feed the young of the pigeon? or does the panther give suck to the young elks?"

Puzzled at the abruptness with which these questions were put, and perfectly ignorant of the meaning desired to be conveyed, Kennedy remained silent, turning in his mind every possible means he could think of to obtain their elucidation. A considerable time having elapsed without producing a reply to his observations, the Indian, with a low laugh, addressed the woodsman;

"The head of my brother is dull. Did he have the sloth, or the toad, to teach him to understand?"

There was now no room left for doubting. To any comprehension this was easy, and Kennedy's quick blood was in an instant on fire. Replying to the Indian, he said in English, forgetting all poetry and figure of speech—

"That's a reg'lar thund'ring lie. How was I to get hold of your outlandish speech? Why I could almost understand an ass a precious deal sooner. Oh! don't think to frighten me by putting your hand to your knife—I'm ev'ry bit as good a man as you are; and wouldn't care two straws about taking you, and ev'ry other red skin here, one down, the other up."

The Indian, a perfect master of himself, did not allow his passion to proceed further; but merely observed, in as quiet a manner as possible, as though nothing had occurred to disarrange him, "When the young eagle opens his wings, he wishes to fly. When it seems good, the Mohawk will be upon his journey."

"What!" exclaimed Kennedy in English, whilst the Indian had spoken in his own language, for the surprise and anger of the young

woodsman caused him to throw off all conventional restraint, "You don't mean to say you're going to stay here all day, and let the Piquots quietly make a roast of the Major?"

"Go!" said the Chief. "My brother has seen but few summers, nor do the snows of many winters rest upon his head. How often has he heard a warrior sound his whoop, or listened to the cry of battle? Let him sit with the woman. When it is good, Tasharah will be upon the path."

Perceiving now, from the language of the Chief, that, from some purpose of the latter, the journey would be postponed, if not intended entirely to be put off; and that he must either wait the pleasure of the Mohawk, or prosecute the pursuit by himself deserted by his Indian allies, whom he had fondly imagined would aid him to do the service, of which, like many public characters, he considered he had taken precautions to obtain for himself the lion's share in its reward: but Frank was not destined to be the first example of disappointed ambition. The young woodsman addressed the Chief with the view of

bringing things to a crisis, or of obtaining an explanation of the latter's intentions.

"Then I suppose you're going to cry off, and leave me and Miss Maria to go by ourselves. Or, is this some of your Indian cheating you're up to? It's just like you. There never was a red skin as wasn't a rascal."

The countenance of the Indian suddenly became suffused with passion. In all probability these would have been the last words that the borderer ever would have uttered, if Maria—who had fortunately observed their contention, and had before noticed that the disposition Kennedy evinced towards the Indian was neither the most friendly nor agreeable—feeling alarmed, lest the young man, giving vent to his temper, should get involved in a quarrel, which, besides bloodshed, might cause the absolute abandonment of their enterprise, had not quitted her seat, and advanced towards them; and but for her opportune interference, in all probability, a corpse, in a few minutes, would have been the fearful evidence of how soon man, actuated by his rage, can

level and destroy the most noble of the works of the Deity.

Observing her presence, the Indian, with habitual self-control, banished from his countenance every mark and trace of his late violent emotion; but Kennedy, who now considered the Mohawk to have unmasked himself, and who deemed it altogether unnecessary, had he been able, to conceal from betraying itself upon his visage his opinion of the treachery he conceived the other was about to put into execution, replied to Maria's question, with considerable warmth,

"Why, Miss, it's just as I told you it would be. This Mohawk, with all his talk, isn't one bit better than a Piquot, or any other whooping devil. After all the march he gave us yesterday, he says he won't stir a peg now till it suits him; and of course he means to wait till it's too late to save the Major's scalp." Frank had accompanied his words with a look so full of meaning, of threat, and of menace, that the wary Indian involuntarily drew back, half suspecting

they would be followed up by an immediate attack.

Perceiving that some unfortunate misunderstanding had arisen between the two young men, and which, from the purport of Frank, seemed to threaten a complete annihilation of all her hopes, Maria, with design to discover the origin of the quarrel, enquired of the woodsman what he meant.

"Why, Miss, I think I speak plain enough; but you might have said you didn't understand, if you'd heard what this Indian said to me, when I asked him civilly, if he were going to start; and then, when I couldn't exactly understand what he meant, he called me by a heap of names, that no one but an Indian would have thought of calling a Christian by."

"Surely" said Maria, "you have not been foolish enough to take offence at any metaphor Tasharah may have used, and thus to peril our only chance? If you have, immediately make your peace; and do not, by any quarrel of yours, destroy the sole hope I have."

"Very well, Miss, I'll do it, if you wish," Kennedy replied, extending his hand to the Indian; and the latter, in obedience with her desire, accepted this signal of re-established harmony.

Having procured peace, Maria was on the point of returning to her seat, when the reply of Tasharah to the impatient borderer's question, as to when they should start, arrested her, and caused her to make the same enquiry.

For a few minutes, which appeared to Maria an enormous period of time—for she could not imagine any cause, which, even probably, might be the reason for the Mohawk's requiring thought to prepare what appeared so simple an answer—did the Chief seem to be considering his reply. Once, hurriedly, did his eye wander to Maria; and once, with a sterner expression, did it encounter the fiery glance of the young woodsman: then, fixing his eyes upon the heavens, he slowly replied:

"A bird has sung in my ears, and let the maiden of the Yengese say if what it has sung is true. 'The mouse said to the owl, I'm young. I

cannot get food. Kill not my mother, and when I am old I will be in thy nest' But the eagle said, 'Am not I stronger than the owl? Can he look, like me, in the face of the sun? When the buffalo comes, and treads upon the home of the mouse, can the owl save her? My nest is empty, and I want a mate. If the young mouse will come to my nest, I will drive the buffalo far away into the prairies.'"

Maria had listened to the Indian with attention, but had been unable to comprehend his words. Not so Kennedy: he had heard, with rising indignation, what he afterwards termed, "the precious impudence of the Indian," until, at the close, unable to contain himself longer, he anticipated Maria, who was about to ask of him an explanation, by a burst of anger.

"There, Miss, I told you so. I told you how it would be. From the very first, I saw what he was after; and now he's come regular out with it. If you won't be the squaw of a red Indian, ten to one but he lets the Piquots put the Major in a bonfire."

Maria felt faint, a kind of sickness spread

over her. She had listened to Kennedy's proposal, and had assented to it, with no other sensation than that of the purest filial devotion; yet this of the Chief, and we will not conceal the truth, though much more in unison with her heart, was heard with even a strong desire that it never had been spoken, or that she could reply without the necessary effort of speaking

For some minutes she remained doubtful, what, and how to reply. Her heart dictated an answer in the affirmative: another feeling inclined her to the opposite. But there was a small voice that came to aid the promptings of the first, and whispered, "Remember that it is upon the fate of your father you are about to decide. On your lips, on the words you are about to pronounce, hangs whether he shall return to you, his home, and to his friends; or be consigned to all the torture and lingering torment of refined Indian cruelty. Will you, can you hesitate? Would you deprive, in his last days, your parent of his life; and condemn him to yield his breath among strangers, to whom every groan will be a subject for merriment and

diversion? Reply; and, if you have the heart, light yourself the fire, and behold your father writhing in the flames. What matters it, if yonder chief is not so plumed as some of the warriors of your own country? His descent is from as lordly a race, and his deeds equal in valour those of any rival shade." Thus influenced, Maria replied, whilst a blush suffused her cheek,

"If you require me to make to you the same promise as I have made to Kennedy, I will do it. If, through your particular exertions, my father is released, I will become yours, when you have adopted the faith in which I have been educated."

The Mohawk's eye gleamed with a joy too powerful for him to conceal; and Kennedy appeared as though he had been deprived of all animation, so surprised and confounded did he feel, from the occurrences of the last few minutes.

The band again is in motion. Again does that long moving line of figures cross over the crests of the hills, and dive into the valleys, stedfastly pursuing their flying foe.

CHAPTER VI.

* * * treach'rous;
Yet could he speak with words so fair,
That few were conscious of the evil there,
Till at their feet stretch'd far the downward view;
Then fill'd with sudden fear they backward drew,
And sought t'avoid the dang'rous dreadful deep,
That seem'd to lead to where the damned weep.

SWIFTLY did Vernon's captors hurry on, directting their footsteps towards the nearest Piquot lodges. For any place of safety to have committed his prisoner to, belonging to the French, was, in the opinion of Laborde, far too distant to allow of his being conveyed thither in security; and he also infinitely preferred retaining his power over him, to losing all control by his being acknowledged as a regular captive of war, as he had designed a method, by which he

hoped to make the possession of the Major subservient to his purpose of regaining Maria. His own home, though it offered almost every advantage, was objected to by the Frenchman, on account of the presence of Alice, who he imagined would immediately endeavour to thwart him as soon as she should learn the connexion he was desirous of forming. During the journey, Laborde made several efforts to address the old officer; but he was as often repelled by the coldness of the latter's tone, and by the evident want of confidence with which his advances were met.

Alone was the silence of the march broke by the voice of Vernon's fellow-prisoner, for, expecting his fate, the fearless Indian had commenced chaunting his death-song; and dauntlessly braved his enemies with every term of contempt his imagination could suggest. No delicacy hindered him from applying each and every epithet that suggested itself; and at times he reproached them with cowardice, or repeated the victories of his people, with the deeds of his fathers. To this the Piquots listened, without at-

tempting to reply, save when they informed him, "He would cry in the fire."

Scarce allowing themselves one moment's rest, Laborde and his followers pressed on, until, by using the greatest diligence, on the third morning, the huts of the tribe appeared in the distance. Arranging themselves in order, the Indians advanced towards their homes, yelling, in their loudest and most startling tones, to signify they had suffered a severe loss; but, when on a nearer approach they began to distinguish the persons of their friends, simultaneously they set up a whoop of pleasure, that was repeated for every enemy's scalp in their possession, which had been fixed upon a spear, and now were borne in advance of the party; and then, finally, two louder yells, which seemed to fill the whole neighbourhood with their echoes, announced that two prisoners summed up the fortunes of the day.

Separate dwellings having been assigned to the two prisoners, Laborde sought an interview with the Major; and entered the hut of the latter, his

true feelings concealed under a perfect mask of duplicity. With a smile upon his lips, he addressed the officer, in spite of the expression of hatred and disgust discernible in his countenance.

"I know not whether to say I feel most pleased or grieved, at finding you in your present position. But I hope that my old host," he continued, observing, and affecting to ascribe to another cause, what he read upon the other's countenance, "does not feel offended with me, that I should, from patriotism, seek to remove, from taking an active part against my country, one of Major Vernon's powers and abilities."

"Indeed," replied Vernon with bitter emphasis, "no part of your conduct requires excuse. It was doubtless perfectly necessary for the welfare of your country to destroy my home, to murder the wives and children of my people, to carry my daughter away, and even do your best to deprive me of my few remaining years? Such conduct, sir, requires no excuse—it speaks sufficiently clearly for itself."

"Surely an officer, and one of Major Vernon's acquaintance with military command, must know the difficulty, and almost impossibility, of restraining so perfectly lawless a body as a party of savages; and neither does nor would accuse the officer, whose duty and misfortune it is to be over them, of being a party to and guilty of their excesses. In place of finding fault with me for making your daughter prisoner, you ought the rather to thank me; as, by that expedient, I was enabled to save her life; and had I not, by taking her in my arms, myself borne her away from danger, the certainty is that you would never again have embraced her. As to your last charge, remember it was yourself that compelled me to act, by refusing to surrender. My blood became heated, and it is not fair to consider me culpable, where it is evident your own obstinacy was alone to blame." And Laborde looked towards Vernon, to see what effect his explanation had produced; but the latter, having waited until he had finished, replied, perfectly unmoved by his logic,

"It is a great pity you were not educated for the bar, since I must allow you to possess the power of representing a bad case to its very best advantage. Perhaps your hands did not actually shed the blood, but it was you who admitted the wolves into the fold; and, if the officer is not to be responsible for the acts of those beneath him, perhaps you will inform me who is?"

"I do not mean that an officer is not to be held responsible for the acts of the people committed under his command, but merely, that he should not be considered guilty of their performance; and how was it possible for me, when I ordered the attack upon your fort, to know that its only occupants were women and children?"

"You are convicted," replied Vernon, "from your own mouth, of at least, a small attempt at prevarication, for if I remember rightly, you had so disposed of your attack, that it was impossible for those without to have rendered assistance to the inmates of my house, by the caution you observed in first dispatching the effective part of your force to guard against a return of my

woodsmen and hunters. This would seem to imply your knowledge of our unguarded position."

"That is perfectly true, but I was unable to control circumstances. If you will listen to me I think I can offer an explanation that will remove the doubts you have expressed concerning my veracity, and cause you in some measure to retract your harsh expression."

"You alone are master here," replied the Major, "I am but a prisoner, and you can do as you please; but I feel convinced, you cannot in any measure remove the opinion I have already advanced."

"I am glad, Major Vernon," said the dissembler, "to find you in this reasonable mood; since it leads me to hope that I may be successful in combating your wrong impressions. After I had formed the design of surprising your house, I should rather call it fort, I communicated my intention to some Piquots who joined me, and I arrived in the neighbourhood of your residence. Our scouts having informed us that there were

appearances as if some expedition was being projected on your part, we immediately lay quiet, that we might escape observation, if not already discovered, not desiring a contest where we knew not the chances. Presently, however, the departure of your males roused all the blood-thirsty ideas of my men, and then unfortunately I could do nothing but direct their fury towards some end desirable for my country—you know, sir, the remainder, and now say candidly, am I to blame?"

"I do not perceive," observed Vernon, "that any of your arguments in the least bear against the opinions I have already delivered. Knowingly you yourself led an attack of Indian savages upon defenceless women and children. This you cannot deny."

"Nor do I wish," replied Laborde, "I did do as you say, but it was with the intention of protecting your daughter. Had I not done so, she would inevitably have been numbered among the dead."

"Indeed it showed a consideration for her

even much greater than I could have given you credit for, after the base and dishonorable manner in which you tried to take advantage of the trust she had placed in you; but I suppose you have an excuse ready for this also."

"I am happy," said the Frenchman, "at your first referring to a circumstance which I regret more than words can express, and which, though I cannot excuse, yet perhaps I may be able to palliate. I loved your daughter, I love her still, I spoke to her of my passion; she spurned me, and treated my offers with scorn and disdain; I became wild and reckless of conseqences; and I thank kind Heaven that prevented me from the committal of my intended crime by sending as its agent that honest woodsman. Believe me, I repent most fully of my folly, and I hope that you do not consider the odium of a bad action to last for ever, and will, on account of the fulness of my repentance, forgive me the fault I meditated, and the which, I confess, can never be sufficiently grieved for."

"I will not pretend," replied Vernon, "to

judge whether your present conduct is the result of real sorrow, or whether it is merely another piece of deception which you are seeking to practise upon me, but whichever it may be, it does not produce the least effect. If your attempt had succeeded no after repentance would have been available, and for this reason I cannot forget the deep, nay fiendish injury you have meditated against my child; and I more than suspect that your late attempt upon her liberty, which, by the aid of Heaven we so fortunately frustrated, was but a renewal of your first design, and that had you succeeded in bringing her hither, you would still have pursued your villanous purposes."

"Those are strong words, sir," said Laborde, his countenance betraying by a hectic flush that passion alone was restrained by motives of prudence and of interest. "Those are strong words, and were you not my senior, should claim an instant notice; for which I would even sooner furnish you your liberty than forego. As it is, your age claims for you an exemption from their

consequences. But," he continued, in a more moderate tone, "if there is any part of my conduct you consider not sufficiently explained, mention it; and I will again endeavour by fair and open argument to convince you that your late words were unjust, the mere offspring of inconsideration, and not of cool reflection? I trust that you will not again apply words of so vile an import to myself."

"I have already," observed Vernon, "informed you that your words were utterly valueless, nor can you by any artful prevarications, blind me to the truth that all your past conduct had its origin in the basest intentions; whatever amendment you may purpose will be best shown in your future."

Laborde could but ill conceal the vexation he experienced, and his anger at Vernon's determined obstinacy in considering him an irreclaimable villain, which he most truly was; not that he cared one tittle absolutely, whether man regarded him as a sinner or a saint, so long as it did not interfere with his nefarious purposes;

but he truly considered that no one, were his baseness known, would be inclined to place the least reliance upon him, and this vision suggested to him the destruction of the fabric he was building to minister to his passions. Hence arose, not from any sensation of shame, his bitter chagrin when he found the Major would not be imposed upon, or believe him to be other than he was.

Still, as for the success of his plans, it was necessary that this disposition should not appear, he strove to, and in some measure concealed it. Then addressing his prisoner with the affectation of a smile, he said,

"I thank you for having thus given my intentions the credit they deserve, and through this I do not now despair of being reinstated in your good opinion, towards the attainment of which I shall direct all my energies; and I hope that time will allow of my calling Major Vernon once again my friend. Since the fortune of war has made you my prisoner, allow me to make your captivity as pleasurable as it is in my power

to render it. Whatever you desire, that is compatible with my duty as an officer to grant, you have but to mention, and immediately it shall be yours."

"I return you many thanks," said Vernon, who was not so easily to be deceived or blinded, as Laborde seemed to imagine, "and feel vastly obliged to you for your civility; but, as I require nothing more than to be treated with the respect due to my rank, I shall in no manner avail myself of your offer, for which, however, I feel grateful."

Laborde remained for some minutes silent, partly from design to perceive if Vernon would alter in his determination, and partly to prepare himself for unmasking the battery to which all his previous conversation had been but intended to serve as a curtain. Then, with assumed hesitation, as though he himself felt the delicacy of the observations he was about to make, he said,

"Major Vernon, there is one thing I thought would have conduced highly to your comfort and

happiness, whilst you remained with me a prisoner; and which I feel every embarrassment in referring to. Your daughter—for whom you must feel considerable anxiety on account of her present unprotected state, as she must now be surrounded by persons to whom she is a perfect stranger—would you not, if I guaranteed, and pledged my word as an officer, that the freedom of her motions should not in the least be molested, and that she should be perfectly without any interference from me; would you not prefer her presence, and the certainty of her well-being, to your present state of doubt? A note from you, which I think I could easily transmit to her through the hands of a trusty messenger, would quickly ensure her presence." Laborde knew not that Maria was so near; but considered that, accompanied by a part of the victorious Mohawks, she was now returning home.

Vernon had listened with impatience; for, without difficulty, he saw through the flimsy veil under which Laborde sought to conceal his de-

sign of regaining possession of his daughter; and feeling heartily disgusted at the many attempts to deceive him he had detected, he replied, throwing off all reserve, and alone anxious to end a conference, wherein he knew that almost every word uttered on the opposite side, if it was not absolutely a falsehood, was very far from the truth, said, in rather an excited tone,

"Do you really consider me so ignorant of your duplicity, as to place my daughter—whom I have already once rescued from out of your power—again, of my own free will, within your reach? This I shall not do; and I consider it would be preferable for both, were our conversation to stop in its present position. It will in some measure hinder you from exposing your treachery and deceit further." As he said this, Vernon bowed.

Laborde dared not allow himself to speak. He knew his present temperament was not the one to permit him to answer in a manner consonant with his purposes. He wished to have time to consider his line of policy and to act according

to reason, and not to passion. So, returning Vernon's bow, he withdrew.

Quitting the hut with rapid footsteps, the Frenchman walked in a direction to get without the range of the Piquot lodges, intending to seek for solitude to arrange his ideas in a regular train, and to consider of some method to turn or bend Vernon to his wishes. Whilst pursuing his course, he came upon a party of the returned warriors, who were performing one of the customary ceremonies of their people, and making one of those exhibitions which forms one of the great contradictions in their character, causing the beholder to hesitate long, before he pronounces the Indian race as being the most stern and rigid, or ridiculous and buffoon-like of the human kind.

Around a pole, to which were attached numerous trophies taken from their enemies, the Piquots were dancing with wild and uncouth gestures and antics, and with deafening yells, relating, in boastful terms, their own exploits, or addressing, in contemptuous tones, the different

articles of their foes. Laborde at once recognised this as being " The dance of the returned warriors," in honor of some deceased friend; and he perceived the widow, sitting in the entrance of her lodge, to whom, in occasional pauses of the dancing, the Piquots threw articles as presents, as though intending, by their temporal gifts, to afford her consolation for her eternal loss.

Being desirous of lessening his agitation, so as to allow of his employing the whole power of his mind in an unbiassed manner, Laborde spent some minutes, looking on as a spectator at this folly, seeking to divert, for the present, his thoughts into some other channel, than that of dwelling upon his late rebuff, so that he might recall them in a calmer mood.

The Indians, conscious of having a spectator to their performances, sought to inspire themselves to greater agility, and to strain their throats to greater uproar; and Laborde was, for the moment, amused, while he listened to men, boasting, in the most outrageous manner, of the

actions of themselves and ancestors, when they could not but be conscious of how lately they had sustained a most signal defeat.

" Is this a tomahawk?" enquired a Piquot, addressing one of these weapons, " or is it the spade of a woman? Thou art fonder of the smoke of tobacco, than of that of battle. Thou lovest peace better than the blood of warriors. When thou wast smoked in the council of women, thou was happy; but when thou sawest blood, thou wast sick."

" Art thou the bow of a mohawk," said another, " or a bending reed? Thou hast never sent a shaft through the heart of a brave—Tatomah is a warrior; and the pale faces of the Yengese look whiter, when a bird sings in their ears, ' Tatomah is on the track of his foes'—Tatomah shall teach a Mohawk reed to bend like a Piquot bow; and when he takes thee in his hands, let his foes sing their ' death-song.' Thou hast never sent a shaft further than a boy can cast a stone—Tatomah will teach thee to send one further than the flight of the eagle.

Thine arrows shall cross the shoreless lake, and fly in the face of the sun."

"Knife of a Mohawk girl!" cried a third, "didst ever drink the blood of a foe? No! for thou never leapest in thy sheath at the sound of the 'war-song,' nor heard the sound of battle. In the hands of the Mohawks thou cuttest the ripe corn or wentest in the hands of a boy, that thou mightest boast over the timid deer—a Piquot will teach thee how to take the scalp of a warrior."

"Swift lightning of the pale faces, Sarnagooke will teach thee to talk as the Great Spirit," said another Indian, addressing a rifle, and who was not much celebrated on account of his piety. "In the battle thou shalt sound as the hissing of the Great Serpent, and men shall tremble when the thunder of Sarnagooke is heard."

Leaving the Indians to continue their duty and amusement, Laborde turned away, and was proceeding in his original direction when he perceived in front of him Shohaske, the principal conjuror of the tribe—a man who, by a success-

ful series of imposition upon the credulity of his nation, had risen among the Piquots to the highest authority, and who, under the title of "Chief Medicine Man," held equal power over the wills of his tribe with that enjoyed by the legitimate ruler, and no small portion of his influence was to be ascribed to certain intervals when his soul, quitting to all appearance his body, held converse on affairs of importance to the state with the Great Spirit of the red men; but these trances were most heretically accounted for in secret by Laborde as being the effects of some all powerful doses of rum which he had given to the priest in return for the forwardance of certain views of his own. Increasing his speed, the former soon overtook him, and as he passed made the other a signal to follow. In compliance with this, at a considerable distance—so that none might imagine it was his intention to converse in familiar terms with a white man, and incited by curiosity as to what might be the subject of so strange a conference, be tempted to track him and listen—with a thoughtful and

sauntering gait the crafty savage followed the artful and designing Frenchman.

Having determined his line of conduct, as well as a plan by which to render the authority of the sorcerer available, when he had proceeded a sufficient distance to be secure from eaves-droppers, Laborde paused in a quiet and secluded spot to allow the Indian to come up with him. His companion having arrived, both seated themselves upon the ground, and for a time neither spoke. Laborde wished to affect a carelessness in the negociation he was about to open, lest by betraying any anxiety the Indian might discover how essential, and absolutely necessary were his services; and for the rendering of them would require so high a remuneration as to place himself in an independent position for some time to come; and the Frenchman felt too highly his value as a coadjutor to desire to place him in such a situation, for he had other plans, which as yet but in embryo, frequently usurped so high a place in his desires as to hold but a subordinate position to his designs upon Maria. As it was,

circumstances prevented their ever proceeding farther than his own bosom.

The Indian, from much the same motive, was also silent. He knew that his services were required, but for what he was ignorant. Hence he was desirous not to commit himself too soon, that he might be in a position to make the best possible bargain he could, and demand a proper remuneration for whatever he should do; for several trances of late had so diminished his small and secret store that he began to feel alarmed lest, being deprived of his usual stimulant, he would no longer be enabled to maintain with suitable *éclat* his present place in the councils of his nation. The Indian loved, as much as any man, the importance of being one of those in high authority, though but as a tool in the hands of another.

Finding that his wily companion could not be seduced into opening the conference, Laborde felt himself constrained to commence it himself, and the following conversation ensued, being occasionally changed from French into Piquot,

or from Piquot into French, as either of the speakers warmed upon his subject; but the ordinary observations of the two were made in a curious jargon composed of both these tongues, which custom had rendered familiar to the parties.

Laborde addressed the conjuror, assuming an air of the most perfect indifference, but in which attempt he rather failed, as the Indian himself, accustomed to sustain the most severe scrutiny of his own, did not fail to remark the appearance of effort on the countenance of the intriguer, and prepared himself accordingly.

"My father comes from the Council of Sachems. What say the chiefs of a wise nation."

"That the Mohawks are dogs!" replied Shohaske, carefully avoiding a direct reply, for he perceived, whatever it was Laborde required that he was aiming at obtaining from him information of what had occurred at the council, and he did not desire to give this without knowing to what purpose it would be applied.

Finding himself thus foiled in his first attempt,

Laborde prepared for a fresh attack, and after a few minutes observed—

"The Sachems of the Piquots are wise, for the Mohawks indeed are dogs. The wise men have two prisoners: will my father tell me what his nation will do? Do the Sachems think the 'old man' is a Mohawk?"

"The Sachems have spoken wisely," replied the Indian, "but Shohaske could not hear, for his pitcher is empty. Will my son open the ears of Shohaske, for a bird has sung there is much fire water in the home of the stranger?"

Laborde at once understood this hint, and quickly removed all obstructions to the Indian's organs of speech and hearing by producing a small bottle, containing about half a pint of rum, which he passed to the conjuror. The latter immediately had his tongue loosened, and his memory restored by partaking of rather a long draught of its contents. Parting the bottle from his mouth, apparently most unwillingly, he first gazed upon it affectionately, and then proceeded to place his treasure out of sight,

for its discovery by any accidental passer would not only have caused the elucidation of the mystery of his fits, but would have rendered him, upon its becoming public, a degraded and despised member of the community, he replied,—

"The rum is good, and my son has an open hand. Let him listen, for Shohaske will tell him the truth. The Sachems remembered the deaths of their warriors, of their sons, and of their young men, and they said, 'Let the Mohawk sing his death song, but let the Yengese warrior live, for the white men slay not a brave when they have taken a Piquot prisoner.'"

"What do they intend to do with regard to the Major, the Yengese prisoner?" enquired Laborde in French, "he slew one of the Piquots, did the Sachem forget it?"

"The Sachems of the Piquots remembered a son was wanting among the lodges of their people, yet they said 'let the Yengese warrior live.' Shohaske did not speak, for he said, 'is not this the prisoner of the stranger among the huts? if he say let him live, then shall Shohaske say, let

him live; if he say he is my enemy—let him die; then shall Shohaske say, let him die."

Pleased that the wily Indian had not yet given his powerful opinion, but had purposely reserved himself to act as an echo to his own wishes, and thus was at liberty to place the full weight of his influence in either scale, Laborde replied in the Piquot tongue,

"If my father would hear the words of his son let him listen; the Yengese slew one of my friends, the Piquots, let him die."

The Indian paused for a considerable time before he spoke. He knew it must be from some very powerful motive that one white man condemned another to the unenviable termination of his life by the means of fire and torture; and though the officer was of an opposite country and race, he knew this was not sufficient reason for what Laborde meditated; and as the conjurer had already discovered the latter individual to be a very great villain, he came to the conclusion that it was more for the advancement of some scheme of his own, than from indignation at the

death of the Piquot, that the Frenchman desired the destruction of his prisoner. In vain he sought to imagine what this motive could be, as well to determine what price he ought to require for his co-operation, as whether Vernon might not pay better if he were to act on the opposite side. Perceiving Laborde was impatient for his reply, he said, his avarice dictating to him,

"Should Shohaske sing in the council, 'let the warrior of the Yengese die', will the hand of my son be open? shall the back of Shohaske be naked? shall his pitcher be seen to the bottom?"

"Exert your influence," said Laborde in French, "cause that the Major be condemned to die, and I, besides giving you two new blankets, will fill your pitcher twice. If you do not agree to this, you shall never have anything more from me."

"My son speaks well," observed the overjoyed sorcerer, "and Shohaske will see it is done."

"How," enquired Laborde, "do you purpose

having the resolution of the chiefs to-day put aside? had we not better consider of some plan by the which we may excite your countrymen against my prisoner, or have you one already prepared?"

"Does my son think that the 'head mystery man' of the Piquots would lie? He has said it shall be done, and my son shall see how Shohaske keeps his word."

"Then you have determined upon the method you intend to pursue," said Laborde, still making use of the French language, "if you have, I would like you to explain it to me, that I might myself judge of its feasibility."

"Then let my son listen," replied the conjuror, "the chiefs spoke, but Shohaske was silent. He will drink some of the 'fire water,' and whilst he sleeps, the Great Spirit, Athaensic, will say to him, 'Tell the men of the Piquots, that the Yengese warrior who slew one of their braves, must die.' Then, when they hear this, the chiefs will call together an assembly of the young men, aud Shohaske will speak, and the Yengese war-

rior shall die, for Shohaske will say, Athaensic wills it."

"And Sarnagooke, too, will say he has heard Athaensic speak," said that Indian, suddenly appearing from among some bushes, for having been desirous of discovering from what design the conjuror had quitted the village, he had been induced to follow him, and thus, first became an auditor to, and subsequently an actor in the plot for the destruction of the Major.

Betwixt Sarnagooke and Shohaske, previous to this, there had existed the greatest antipathy. The former, not placing any faith in the creed, despised its minister, considering him as a mere quack and rather successful impostor, and from his never failing to oppose, and seeking to thwart each one of the conjuror's views, he was thoroughly hated by Shohaske, at whom he never lost an opportunity to sneer, and whom he ridiculed and jested at whenever he could. Another cause of his being such a thorn in the side of the priest, was his being the head and the recognised popular leader of the young men, among

whom, on account of his skill and courage, he enjoyed the same authority as did his opponent, on account of his supposed sanctity among the elders. Shohaske, on his part, sought to weaken the power of his adversary by attacking him with the weapons at his own command, and proclaimed the Piquot to be, wherever he could get a listener, both an infidel and unbeliever.

To the sorcerer, the appearance of his regular and hated antagonist, was not only disagreeable, from his repugnance to the individual, but was also a cause of fear. He imagined that the Piquot now, being master of the secret of his trances, would immediately expose it, and not fail to take advantage of the opportunity to remove him and his competition out of his path.

Laborde, well knowing the bitter animosity of the two, trembled for his plan, and feared that the Indian would divulge and destroy his newly-hatched villany.

Sarnagooke himself, stood perfectly still, enjoying with complete satisfaction, the various emotions of fear, hatred, and defiance, uneasiness

and perplexity, which his sudden presence had caused, and which the two conspirators could not even attempt to conceal. At last, finding that surprise had deprived either of the power of utterance, he observed sneeeringly, first address. ing Laborde, and then the conjuror, and the air of triumph that accompanied his words, told he well knew how strong had become his hold on both,

" My brother is very cunning; does he think if the Yengese warrior die, that he will catch the pretty singing bird? Does not Athaensic speak with a loud voice? Say, among the young men, Sarnagooke has heard her speak."

Though at first dismayed, Laborde quickly recovered himself; and, perceiving something in the manner of the Piquot which led him to hope, with a little judicious playing of a bait, he might both secure his silence and useful services, he replied, preparing his words with a little seasonable flattery, " Sarnagooke is an adder—when he crept, he made no more noise than does a fish in deep water. I said, ' Sarnagooke

is dancing—his eyes are blind, and I will go to council with Shohaske.' But Sarnagooke is a cunning old owl; and I am the foolish rattlesnake."

An Indian is as much susceptible of flattery as the most civilised of men; and Sarnagooke was no exception to the rule. Laborde saw, with pleasure, that his words had been productive of a good effect. The Indian, almost immediately, becoming more courteous, dropped his sneering expression of countenance, and replying in a pleased tone of voice, "My brother speaks as the mocking bird, and his words are very sweet. He says true: Sarnagooke is a great warrior—he has seen the backs of his foes oftener than he has seen suns."

Determined not to allow the fire to be extinguished before it had well served his purposes, but to apply its heat and warmth to the forwardance of his own views, Laborde again spoke, with the intention of promoting a good understanding, if possible, between the two now pre-

sent, so that he might be able to bring their joint powers to bear, and avail himself of their authority and influence: for an alliance of the credulity and the enterprise of the Piquots, with the key of the bond in his own power, would give to him the sway of the nation. "Wherefore," said the Frenchman, "does a cloud rest upon the face of Shohaske? Let him speak friendly to the young man; for who is a greater warrior than Sarnagooke, and who a more cunning mystery man than Shohaske?"

Again success attended the words of the crafty Frenchman; and, after a few preliminary remarks, he had the satisfaction of perceiving the hitherto implacable enemies exchange, according to the Indian method of ratifying a reconciliation, some trifling articles of dress; and then addressing the young Indian, he said: "What will the brave warrior, the cunning snake do, when he shall hear Shohaske say, Athaensic has said, that a Yengese warrior has slain a brave of the Piquots, and he must die. What

will Sarnagooke whisper in the ears of the young men? Will he say, let him die, or let the slayer of the Piquot live?"

"Will the hand of my brother be open, if Sarnagooke shall say, 'Let a white man die?' If it will, then let my brother say, what shall be in the hut of a warrior," replied the Indian, who wished thus early to know what reward it was probable his services would meet with: for with intuitive perception the Piquot comprehended that a compact was now being formed, and that he was hiring, and binding himself to a master, for an indefinite period of time.

"Name what you require," said Laborde in French, overjoyed at his success, thus far, and desirous to render him, for the future, eager of tendering his services, in consideration of the valuable return he received for them; and by exciting his avarice, ever after to retain him at his command—"Name what you require, and you will find I have an open hand."

The Piquot, now, found himself in the position of a man, who, having discovered a mine of

gold, yet finds it perfectly valueless, and knows not how to render available the precious ore. He remained considering for a long time what to request. He was fearful of asking too much, as well as unwilling to underrate himself. Had Laborde made him an offer of any particular article, which possessed a value in his eyes, he would eagerly and gladly have accepted it; but, having a choice of such a variety, he was perfectly undetermined upon what to fix. Pipes, iron tomahawks, lead, powder, rifles, blankets, in fact every thing of consideration to an Indian, appearing each as though separately offered to his acceptance, were capable by their display, to have puzzled one even much richer in these necessary articles of an Indian's domestic possessions.

Perceiving his perplexity, and also, that by holding forth so large a view to the Indian, he gave him room for the too great exercise of his cupidity, Laborde came to his assistance. Affecting to consider, that the Indian's hesitation arose from a doubt as to the integrity of his of-

fer, he said, in an offended tone, " Does my brother think I have sung to him, or that I will not do as I have said? Let Sarnagooke say to the young men, the Yengese warrior must die; and let the fire be lighted, and let the Yengese die: and two blankets for his back, and a rifle to slay the Mohawks with, shall be in the cabin of Sarnagooke."

" My brother has spoken well," replied the Indian, his breast being elated at the promised acquisition of riches. " Sarnagooke will speak as my brother wishes. Let Shohaske, the cunning medicine-man, say, ' There must be a talk.' Then the young men will speak for the Yengese to die."

" And you," said Laborde to the conjuror, " will not forget to speak in the ears of the old men."

" Shohaske," replied the conjuror, whose eyes sparkled, and who appeared to have become very unsteady; for, his nerves having been most rudely assailed by the appearance of his adversary, he had sought to fortify them by a refer-

ence to Laborde's gift, which had brought him not far from the unpriestly state of inebriation. "Shohaske will hear Athaensic speak, and will tell his dream to the Piquots. Then shall the Yengese die."

Having now placed the whole of his plot in a successful train, and, by the addition to his party of Sarnagooke, having small cause to fear disappointment, Laborde proposed, that each should separately pursue his way home, to prevent any suspicions being excited as to what had led to their conference, or cause two such opponents as Sarnagooke and Shohaske, to become so amicably disposed. Prior to their separation, Laborde arranged that neither for the present should openly lay aside his animosity, so that, at the assembly, their co-operation being unexpected, every thing might be carried; and the party averse to the death of the Major, expecting Sarnagooke to oppose the priest, would find themselves entirely unprepared by the strange sight of these two acting in concert.

CHAPTER V.

Thus sung the dread spirit. as he passed him by.
"To the valley of vengeance, I fly and I fly;
For loud, deep, was the curse that has call'd me from home,
From those far distant halls, where I wander and roam.
A mother's, a widow's, it arose on the air;
By its spell, then, it call'd me, to her, to be near;
And now swiftly I speed on the wings of the wind,
I'm no niggard to grant, that my votaries find.
But how many are they who repent when I'm come,
And repent when's too late, for the deed they have done.
No demon, like passion, has so mighty a sway,
Those who love, or who hate, all who cherish, who slay,
All these are my subjects, and many are they."

DEEP in the depths and darkness of a mountain ravine, which in spring was the bed of a roaring torrent, lay concealed the Mohawk band; and so close were they to the lodges of the Piquots, that often the playful wind brought the voices of their inmates with startling distinctness to the ear.

With unwearied and unslacking speed had Tasharah followed on the scent of his foe; but alone had nearly arrived up with him, to see him enter his house with more of the pride and assumption of a conqueror, than of the shame and dejection of the vanquished, and where for the present he could rest in security. The Mohawks, as their object was to rescue the major, and not to involve themselves in so doubtful and dangerous a task as that of attacking an intrenched enemy, had been led by their chief to their present position; which, being difficult of approach, admitted of an easy defence. But what served as a far greater protection to their concealment than even the darkness and dreariness of their hiding place, was the fear and horror with which their neighbours regarded the spot they occupied; supposing it to be the favourite residence of spirits inimical to the welfare of their people; and they well knew that one of the bitterest foes of their race resided there. Among the Piquots there was not a warrior but preferred to make a considerable de-

viation from his path to passing within reach of their malignant jurisdiction; and, regularly, did each brave make his offerings of tobacco smoke, whenever he went either to the war or to the hunt, for the purpose of in some measure averting their evil designs, and of propitiating their favour. Rumour referred to the following as being the cause of their detestation of the spot.

During an incursion of the Piquots into the lands of their foes, the Iroquois, they took prisoners a whole family of the tribe of the Onondagas; and as they had had, until the present time, every success in their expeditions, and as there were but few widows in the lodges of the Piquots, it was determined to spare all but the father, who was a famous warrior, and in the capacity of priest of Athaensic, and of the spirits of evil, had gained great knowledge by the dreams with which these powers rewarded their zealous servants. By this means he directed his countrymen with council, which when they observed turned to their own benefit; but, when despised, was sure to be followed by some severe

mark of the displeasure of the fearful goddess, and always ended in their regretting their obstinacy or incredulity. Some few of the older and wiser among the nation sought to oppose the decision of the young and headstrong, observing, that it would be absurd and foolhardy to provoke the powers by offering violence to one so favored, and evidently under their protection. To this the others replied, that the Piquots were warriors, and had so often conquered, and seen the backs of their enemies, they would be obliged to the spirits to aid the latter, that they might have an opportunity of a fair struggle, and of striking their foes in front. Some went farther, and said, that the Piquots had always conquered men, and were not afraid to encounter spirits, whom they could destroy, if they came in a tangible shape; and, if they came disembodied, neither could injure the other. If by their advice the powers should aid their adversaries, what cared they? Their Sachems were wise; their hunters cunning and strong; their warriors valiant and courageous; their valleys

abounded with venison; their streams with fish; the wild pigeon cooed, and the bear growled in their woods. The wise man of their enemies was told he should die.

And the priest prepared to die, for Athaensic had told him he must. For she had heard, even in her lofty dwelling in the heavens, the loud and boastful expressions of the Piquots over their foes, and had said, 'These red men, who call themselves greater than all the sons of the land, have surely grown too proud to attend to my worship:' and she visited the land of the Piquots, and she found there were no harvest feasts, no green corn feasts, and the men had grown vain enough to consider themselves greater than the powers of the wind, and than the Manitons of the flood, and derided even their priests. Then she became very wrathful; but, before she punished them, she determined to see if their hearts were so hardened as they seemed; and she told her priest to go to a place where the Piquots should make him prisoner. He obeyed, and became a prisoner as she told him. And he eat

not of the food of the Piquots, for she fed him each night; but the young men only laughed, and said, If Athaensic keeps her priest from being hungry, will she keep him from burning in the fire?

In the night, before the day when the Piquots were to tie her favorite to the stake, Athaensic went to the couch of every warrior, and whispered in their ears dreams of ill omen; and in the morning, when they had told their dreams to the Chief Medicine man of their tribe, they found that every warrior, from the youngest that had just swallowed the bitter draught, even to the aged and white headed, had dreamt dreams that forbade the execution of the Iroquois priest, and that, should they persist in their intention, they must expect some terrible punishment.

At first, the Piquots, surprised at this coincidence, were inclined to yield to the evident will of the goddess, but presently the younger began to say, —

"What care we for Athaensic? Did she give

me this bow, or this gun, or this tomahawk? Was it her knife or mine that slew the fat buck when our babes wanted food? Did she kill the buffalo, and give me this robe?"

Another party said,

"Our priest is a liar, he has sung in our ears, the Onondaga is a priest, and ours has lied that he might not die. Shall we listen to a liar, that would save his foe because he is of his own order."

But a third, who were composed of the most wicked, and greatest scorners, said,

"Shall we be afraid of Athaensic? of a woman? If she would save her conjurer let her come herself, but knives are sharp, and she may be warm in the same fire as her favorite. Shall our nation become women? and after so many strangers have come, shall we say to them, we called you to see how a Piquot can torture, but we are afraid of a woman, go to your homes, and send us petticoats?"

The arguments of the latter were effective, for none liked to be considered women by the chang-

ing of their purposes among the different tribes whose representatives found themselves present.

The sun had risen high in the Heavens, and now stood midway in his vault of blue, looking with a clouded and angry countenance upon the Piquots, dragging with loud and horrible cries, their prisoner to the stake. But when they were half way to the ravine, where the pile had been made, Athaensic whispered in his ear, so breaking the cords which bound him as easy as though they had been but a single thread of the spider's web, he said to the Piquots,

"Men of the Piquots, Athaensic will yet give you an opportunity to repent, and hinder you from committing so dreadful a crime as to slay her priest. Send one of your swiftest runners to the Valley of Flowers, and there he will see a band of Yengese, and though they are many, and have much of the mighty thunder, ye shall not be afraid, but sound your whoop of war, and take many scalps. Then when ye find my words are true let me go away safe, nor anger her whom I serve."

And a swift runner, Pelohate, went to the Valley of Flowers, and he found the words of the priest were true, and the Piquots sounded their war whoop, and took many scalps; but when they had conquered, they laughed still at Athaensic, and altered not in their purpose, and they began to torture their prisoner, who died in the flames without a groan.

And Athaensic was moved with great passion, and she sent a storm during the night, that destroyed all the young crops of the Piquots; nor was this the only punishment that formed the commencement of a series under which the Piquots laboured until their nation became extinct. A few warriors, returning from a distant expedition, brought the unwelcome news that a war-party, composed of the flower of their tribe, had been almost entirely destroyed.

Instead of grieving and repenting for their crime, when they saw how severely they were punished, the Piquots, in their rage for the loss they had sustained, determined to destroy the children, as they had the father.

In vain did the mother beseech them to spare her babes, they heeded not her words, but tearing from her her two children, hurried to the pile, where they immolated them as they had their parent.

Whilst yet the flames and smoke were ascending, and the Indians were listening with delight to the screams of agony and of suffering which broke from the two children, as the scorching flames curled round their tender bodies, and seemed to be deriving consolation for the severe infliction that had fallen upon their tribe, the mother appeared standing at some distance upon a rock.

Raising one arm in the air, she pronounced a curse which even then was felt, and which finally weighed upon the people, till they sunk from among the red men of the wilderness.

'Panthers, not men! spillers of the blood of the innocent and the feeble! cursed may ye be; may your babes fall under the unsparing tomahawk, and never live to tread in the path of the brave, and may the destruction of the present moment overtake the rest of your people.'

As she spoke a flash and a sound like thunder were almost simultaneously seen and heard, the earth seemed to open, and the stones flew about in every direction, and of forty warriors one only lived long enough to tell the tale.

From that time forth, lived the widow of the priest in a lone cavern, in the most secluded part of the ravine, regarded by the Piquots with the utmost dread and superstitious horror, who, however, regularly placed food for her in certain places. Rarely was she ever seen among her neighbours, but, whenever she did make her appearance among the huts, it was the sure and certain indication of some approaching misfortune to their inhabitants. After one visit, Bodasin, a famous brave, and the whole of his family, were found in their lodge brained and scalped. After a second, Kabeskunk, one of the most renowned warriors, was found a corpse, having received, from some spirit's hands, a mortal blow in his chest, and been deprived of his scalp by the same agency.

Frequently were the marks of the mocassins

of the revengeful goddess found, leading towards the widow's dwelling; yet no Indian was ever bold enough to disturb their conference, or attempt to enter within the precincts of a place so replete with destruction to his race. At the present time, the Piquots, when a young brave had discovered the footsteps apparently of warriors, leading to this mysterious place, trembled, for they perceived the intention of the Spirits to decoy them to their destruction; and they shuddered at the idea of the neighbourhood of such unearthly, potent, and implacable foes.

Secure from interruption, and deriving confidence from the assurances of their Chief, the Mohawks, observing a profound silence, lay secure in their concealment, awaiting the decision of the elder warriors, who were debating concerning what measures had best be pursued; and until that decision should become known, were amusing themselves as they best could.

Maria was seated upon a rude couch of turf, and her eyes were as bright as when our tale commenced. Her travelling, in place of being a

fatigue, had been regarded as a pleasure; and she neither felt, nor considered as material, the slight privations and inconveniences she underwent. Viewing everything, her father's position out of the question, rather as an agreeable jaunt. Her romance inclined her to be pleased with all; and in place of feeling that distasteful emotion, which colder breasts would have experienced, she viewed everything with all the warmth and heat of fancy.

Kennedy was almost the only one, over whose breast was cast the shadow of grief. He feared that he would lose the reward, since it appeared impossible to perform the service that was to entitle him to receive it. Tasharah, to prevent his interference, had designedly neglected summoning him to the council now being held, and thus ignorant, even of his position, he found himself a perfect cypher; and it required not a very great exercise of his perception to understand that his presence was only tolerated, and that whatever he purposed must be performed entirely by himself. From this unfavourable aspect of

his affairs, he nearly despaired of success, and had become well nigh desperate. At one time, he thought of bursting into the Piquot village, and trust to the confusion he would cause, to be enabled to cut the Major's cords, and escape with the latter. Another time, he was tempted to steal under cover of the night among the lodges; and with his own single arm attempt, quietly, to dispose of the guards, whom he knew that the jealousy of the Indians would place around their prisoner. With a sigh, however, he was compelled to dismiss both of these, as even his sanguine mind could not be brought to consider them but as visionary. Then how heartily he cursed the Indian, whom he conceived to have robbed him of his heart's mostly coveted treasure. Enraged at the prospect of ill success that he had drawn upon himself, he felt inclined to deprive his rival of all chance, and of his life at the same moment; and, under the influence of his passion, Frank examined the priming of his weapon. Still hope bade him not to despair; and he determined to watch the mo-

tions of the Indians, and, if possible, to discover their purpose and designs, and profit by their intentions.

Removed, so that no inquisitive ear might intrude upon their conference, sat four of the chiefs in consultation with Tasharah: and one of the former, a distinguished brave, rising, opened his views in the following speech:

" Let my brothers listen to the words of Nicoman. The lying Piquots have crept upon my brother whilst he slept, and stole away from him a white warrior of the Yengese; and they have said ' Let us light a pile, and see how a pale face weeps.' But my brother has said, ' The Iroquois are warriors. Shall they let the stranger, to whom they said, ' The Piquots are women'— shall they let him die, and let him say, ' It was the Iroquois that were women. They talked much when their enemies were away, but when they saw them they trembled 'like timid deer.' When my brother spoke thus, the Iroquois listened and said, ' He shall not die:' and they followed upon the trail of the mocassin of a coward

whose back was towards his foe, and face towards his own women; but he had long legs like a deer, and the Mohawk could not catch him, and now he is among his lodges. My brother has said, ' The Yengese shall not die;' and he must not lie. Then listen to the words of Nicoman, and he will tell how to blind the eyes of the cunning Piquots, and how to prevent them from taking the scalp of the Yengese. Let the Mengwe wait until their enemies take their prisoner to the stake, then shall they shout their war-whoop, and the Yengese will not die. Nicoman has spoken," said the Indian, seating himself.

" Nicoman is a very cunning warrior; but he is like the wise old owl, he cannot fly fast," said Powhasket, another brave, after he had allowed the customary interval to elapse; and who was distinguished from the preceding speaker, as being of a far more fiery and hasty disposition. "He moves slow, like the tortoise. Will my brother keep his hand long on the hole of the viper; or will he draw it away before he is stung? The Piquots are cunning as snakes—they will smell

their foes, as the tiger-cat does the footsteps of the hunter; and they will call their nation together; and though the Iroquois are brave, yet do the wolves destroy the buffalo; and there is a tender dove," pointing to Maria, " and she cannot stretch her wings nor fly. Will my brothers wait until the Piquots shall send runners into their villages, to say: 'A foolish deer has placed herself within reach of the hunters, come let us slay it.' Now listen to the words of Powhasket. As soon as the sun shall hide his head in the waters, let the Mengwe sound their whoop of war; for then will the Iroquois be strong as the leaping panther, and the Piquots be heavy with sleep like the elk; and many will be the widows among the Piquots. Powhasket has spoken:" and with this the Indian seated himself, making way for Tasharah, who arose, evidently inclined towards neither of the two preceding proposals.

"Nicoman is very cunning, Powhasket is very brave—let my brothers listen to the words of Tasharah, in whose wigwam are the scalps o

many nations. The Piquots are cowards; in the day they fear to look a warrior in the face, and in the night they tremble at the hootings of the owl. Let my brothers look around and they will see the valley of Piquot bones, the vale of the blood of the priest of the Onondagas."

At the annunciation of the spot wherein they were, the Indians, unable to conceal their surprise, testified it by their usual exclamation of "Ugh," and by the unqualified horror depicted upon their countenances, declared their opinion of the daring profanation, of which they had been guilty, in treading, though ignorantly and unintentionally, upon ground peculiarly sacred to so powerful a deity; for the crime of the Piquots and the retribution of the goddess had spread both far and near, and was known among all the tribes and nations of the land.

Perceiving their dread, and being anxious to remove the superstitious horror of his auditors, lest they should become terrified into the abandonment of their present secure position, Tasharah, having allowed their first surprise to settle down into fixed attention, continued,

"Let my brothers lift up their eyes to yonder clump of trees: there dwells the widow of the priest of Athaensic, but why are my brothers afraid? is not an Onondaga an Iroquois? are they not all Iroquois? Let not my brothers fear the great witch; for will not the lone woman say, 'these are Mengwe—they are my brothers—they are come to take the scalps of the Piquots.' Then will not Athaensic say, 'my daughter speaks well, tell them they are welcome.' But let my brothers remain till Tasharah shall ask of the lone woman what shall the Iroquois warriors do."

Terrified at finding themselves thus unexpectedly, in such close proximity to the spirits of the other world, the chiefs gladly acquiesced in Tasharah's proposition, hoping if they made the widow a party to their conference, and could obtain her countenance, that they would avert from themselves the punishment they supposed they merited, for their intrusion upon her mistress's domain, and also obtain for themselves both spiritual advice and assistance.

With quick footsteps, Tasharah directed his course towards the widow's residence, and many of his followers, as the news spread whither he was hastening, wondered at his daring, in thus approaching such fearful ground, and at his evidently intimate knowledge of the path; for none knew this was not his first visit to a place held so sacred by the Indians, or that the words of a lone widow and of a bereaved mother had reached the young chief, and that it was to her agency he was indebted for his almost ssupernatural knowledge of the movements of his enemies.

Nor did the Piquots suspect how much more they were indebted to human interference than to malignant spiritual enmity, for the destruction of so many warriors, and for the discovery of so many deeply laid schemes, and for their plans, which though laid with all possible secrecy, being invariably foiled.

Arrived within a few paces of the dreaded being's dwelling, Tasharah looked around as though searching for something, and presently

from beneath a stone drew forth a whistle, from which, on applying it to his mouth, he produced a sharp, shrill sound, and scarce had its echoes died away when at the entrance of the cave appeared her, whose presence and imagined fearful power would have caused the stoutest and boldest of the Piquot warriors to tremble, though unflinchingly they would have sustained the severest tortures of their enemies, or met in combat the mightiest of their adversaries; but there is a something so unmanning in the idea of being opposed to spiritual agency; of being cut off and destroyed by unseen hands; of being assailed by powers invisible to the eye, but which strike with their weapons, blows certain of producing death, at the same time that they are vain to be contended with; that can a child of nature, whose breast is under the rule of imagination, and to whom superstition is belief, be held accountable for allowing fear, thus derived, to master his reason and his courage?

In wild and uncombed disorder flowed some straggling grey locks down the brown and shri-

veled neck of the hag. Her body, with the exception of a piece of cloth around her waist, was naked, discovering the black colour of her skinny limbs. Her eyes, deep sunk in her head, were of a blood red hue, and seemed to glare when excited by her deadly passion—the only bond which still kept her soul chained to earth—with a savage and almost unearthly expression. Her teeth were black as a maiden's hair; and in whatever position she sat or stood, she seemed continually to be in the same state of nervous watchfulness. Leaning upon a staff, she addressed the Mohawk:—

"Who is it sounds the call of blood, and makes that music for my ear? Chief! young panther of the Mohawks, my eyes know you now. Thou art welcome; for thou didst glad my heart with the sight of the blood of the murderers of my children. Sing to me, wherefore hast thou come to the dwelling of the lone widow?"

"My mother speaks sweetly," replied the Chief; "the Piquots have stolen, while Tasharah slept, a Yengese warrior that was his friend,

and Tasharah has said: 'The friend of my people shall not die; the lying Piquots shall not bind him to the stake.'"

"What?" exclaimed the old woman, in her thrill tones, interrupting him, "Have not the Piquots burned enough? Will they again light another pile? Their last fire burned well,—like the noonday sun, its blaze was hot and warm;" and the hag laughed, as much as her hoarse croakings could be termed mirth.

Accustomed to these ebullitions, the Indian waited until she had again become silent, and then continued:

"When Tasharah spoke to his young men, it was like the panther saying to the wolf 'come to a feast on the dead buffalo.' Many warriors of the Iroquois are hid in the valley of Piquot bones; and let my mother hasten to speak in their ears, and to tell them they are welcome; for they fear lest the Spirit of the valley arise and be angry with them as a wounded buffalo, or as the rattlesnake when the foolish white man takes it in his hand. Then let my mother go to

the deceitful priest, and ask of him where is the Yengese, that my young men may know when to sound their whoop, and where they may strike their enemies."

"Let my son rest while the Carcajon would leap on its prey, and then the lone woman will come, for his words have been in her ears as the song of the sweet mocking-bird. Then she will bid the young men welcome, since they are come for the blood of her enemies."

Hastily arraying herself in a coarse blanket, and shading and concealing her countenance under a mask of hair, which was bound around her forehead, forming a veil at once strange and imposing to the sight, whilst it effectually screened her features from all observation, the hag proceeded to follow the vigorous footsteps of the young chief, and though her age was great, her limbs appeared full as supple as his own. Without seeming exertion she kept equal pace with her companion; who, knowing her powers, felt that there was no necessity for a slower course. For, when, once upon a similar mission

of vengeance, he had tarried out of consideration for her age, he had received so smart a reproof for so doing that he carefully avoided again incurring her displeasure and reproaches, when within sight and almost hearing of his followers.

With awe and reverence did the wild and superstitious Mohawks gather round her whom they imagined to be such a favourite with the goddess, and whom they knew to be such an implacable foe to their enemies; and, scarce daring to breathe, they listened silent as statues to her words.

"Men of the Iroquois!" said the hag, addressing her almost trembling auditors; "Men whom Kaypora stole, and fed in the hollows of the oaks with the milk of Carcajons, that ye might be strong and love the cry of war, be not afraid! for Athaensic bids you welcome, and shall make your hearts valiant as those of young buffaloes in the fight; and ye shall feed upon the hearts of your enemies; for the Piquots shall be as deer. Lay ye silent as adders, for your bite

shall be deadly as rattlesnakes. Then many shall be the scalps, and much goods in the cabins of the brave Mengwe; the men chosen by Ariskoni."

Highly flattered at being, as they imagined, thus expressly invited to remain in the favorite abode of Athaensic, and that, too, by the mouth of her own peculiar servant; and encouraged by the assurance conveyed to them through the same messenger—whose authority for what she advanced they never once doubted—of her powerful protection, the Indians listened to the sorceress with most complete satisfaction, and became superstitiously inspired with the idea of their own invincibility.

Whilst the eyes of the hag were wandering round from countenance to countenance, reading with a joyous and malignant sensation the feelings with which she had inspired her auditors—which made the blood flow quicker in her aged veins, as it promised to administer to the only passion that now could afford her a ray of pleasure—they rested upon Maria, who was also

gazing upon her in wonder and surprise, unable to conceive whom it was that was regarded by the Indians with such unconcealed dread. Advancing towards the maid, the hag said in excellent English, "How is it that a bird of the pale faces is thus far from her nest? How is it that the timid hare of the whites is among the fierce wolves of the forest? How is it that a woman is with the warrior upon his path? Let my daughter speak, and let her not fear. The lone woman of the Onondagas is a friend to the Yengese, for they have lifted the hatchet and sounded the whoop against the Piquots."

Maria was startled, when she, who had been addressing her, named herself. She had heard related a tale of the priest of Athaensic, but had never suspected that the being who had excited her attention was her whose bereavement she had often commisserated. As soon as her surprise would permit, she replied, not hesitating to make her questioner her confidante, for she felt assured her own tale would interest one who had herself suffered so severely:

"I am the daughter of Major Vernon, a British officer, who is a prisoner among his enemies and menaced, I fear, with a terrible death. I am here that I may rescue him, and aid, I beseech you, my endeavour. You must know yourself what it is to endure the loss of those we love, and cannot refuse to preserve me, one of your own sex, from a like misery."

"Then it is the child of the Yengese warrior that speaks to the lone widow," said the witch, as soon as the emotion caused by the words of Maria would allow her; for any reference to her affliction was sure to excite her passion. "Does the 'pale face daughter' think that the danger of her father should call for more blood than did the death of the priest of Athaensic? Does the she-bear slay the hunter that takes the cubs of the wolf? But," she continued, "the panther would fix her claws in him that would steal her young; and the lone woman will cause the Piquots to die, not for the Yengese warrior, but for her own babes. Let the daughter be happy, for her father shall not die."

As she spoke these last words, the old woman strode away, having divested Maria, by the confidence with which she had spoken, of a great part of her uneasiness.

Kennedy, as soon as he discovered how strongly his rival had been reinforced—as by this time he had become acquainted with whom the stranger was—felt more than ever inclined towards desperation; for he believed as religiously in the power of their new ally as did the Indians themselves, and was now almost certain, since Tasharah had added her weight to his side, that he had not even the slightest chance; and, as he also perceived, that her conversation being over with Maria, the witch had entered into a consultation with the Mohawk Chief, he determined to make an effort, which if it failed would not place him in a worse position than at present, and at least he hoped to be able to disarrange any plans the Indian might have formed. Thus, if not able to obtain the prize himself, he would prevent his opponent from getting possession of it also. The caprice of love had

caused Frank to forget altogether his friendship for the Major, and to what fearful danger he would be exposing the latter by the conduct he purposed to pursue. He advanced towards Maria with the intention of bidding her farewell.

"I'm going, Miss," he said, "to make a slap for the Major, and to try to bring him off from the Piquots, but it isn't so easy as dropping down a pine, or putting a bullet in a deer's eye, so I've come to say good bye, and if I don't do for you all that I wish, or if I've promised to do more than I can, why it isn't my fault, but that of the Mohawk there, who would put his finger in and spoil all; for, if it hadn't been for his precious impudence, we shouldn't have lost half the day, and might have caught up the Piquots, and given them a precious drubbing, and have saved the Major to a certainty, and then—" Kennedy, perhaps, from feeling a little nervous, did not conclude, or say what would have been the sequel, had all this occurred as he averred it would.

"I hope," replied Maria, "that you do not intend to attempt anything that may expose yourself uselessly to danger; for remember," she continued, smiling and blushing, "that our agreement does not require you to throw away your life, and, also, that you but increase my father's peril by any ill-advised or unsuccessful attempt."

"Why, Miss," replied Kennedy, in a melancholy tone, "if I don't get the Major from the Piquots I don't care if the rascals should get my scalp. I hope you'll say good bye, and if that Indian thief," Frank could not avoid the explosion of his pent up disappointment, "should," here he stammered a little—"should get the Major, why I only hope he won't be bad enough to make an Indian squaw of you."

Affected by his manner, Maria extended her hand in accordance with his request, into which, to her great surprise, Kennedy thrust a dollar piece, and addressing her, whilst something very much resembling tears seemed about to overflow his eyes, he said, "Don't say, Miss, you won't

have it, though it is but a small thing to give to a young lady like you. If the Piquots should get my scalp, you'll sometimes remember Frank Kennedy when you look at it, and are happy; and don't forget he did all he could for you, and wouldn't have cared two straws if he had had fifty scalps to have let the Piquots take every one if he could have done you a service by it." With these words Kennedy turned away, leaving Maria sensibly affected by his devotion, which it required no Argus to perceive was heartfelt.

Casting upon the chief as he passed a look of mingled hatred and defiance, the woodsman, without communicating his intention to any one of the Indians, proceeded towards the Piquot village. Of the success he met with, we will treat in another chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

Oh! sing ye, oh! sing, the lament of the brave;
Oh! sorrow and weep for the soul that is gone:
Swell a stream with your tears, around the damp grave,
Where lieth the clod whose bright spirit is flown.

Had he liv'd, had he liv'd, what pride had been ours,
To have follow'd him o'er bright victory's path;
To have gather'd with him glory's fair flowers,
To have speeded with him the war-bolt of wrath.

But now is he past, and alone can we weep,
And give to the air our sad burthen of sighs.
Whilst in this narrow spot for e'er doth he sleep,
We'll grieve round the spot where our last chieftain lies.

Tehasket! Tehasket! a warrior's son,
Thy fall is avenged, for thy foeman shall die.
Ere shall sink to his rest yon bright blazing sun,
We'll gladden thine ears with his agonies' cry.

HAVING arranged a plan of operations with the Chief, the priest's widow a second time addressed Maria; and with more gentleness in her tone

than the latter had considered her capable of, enquired what message she would desire to be delivered to her father.

" Is my father so near?" Maria exclaimed, for until then she had been ignorant of how small was the space that separated her from her parent, " that one of your age considers nothing of the distance, and yet am unable to proceed to him myself? Tell him how miserable I am that I cannot join him; but that there is reason to hope our separation will not be for long."

" The lone woman will be as the ' mocking spirit'—she will say to the father the words of the daughter, and let not her heart be sad as the heart of a dove whose mate has been slain by the eagle; but let her be joyful, for it is the widow of the priest of Athaensic, the lone woman of the valley of Piquot bones, that bids her to be so. Let her give that which she has upon her arm that her father may know my words are true."

Maria quickly undid a bracelet that she wore, and presented it to the priestess, who, concealing it beneath her blanket, quitted her, bending

her steps towards the entrance of the ravine; and presently was lost to the awe-struck and terrified view of the superstitious Indians.

The hag, unwilling to allow the direction she had come to be discovered—for the sorceress, whenever she visited the huts of the Piquots, affected a mystery both as to her coming and going—purposely made a detour, so as to arrive on the opposite side of the village to that on which the Iroquois lay. As she proceeded, she carefully concealed each footstep; and cautiously avoided, wherever it was possible, leaving any trail by which her course might be tracked; and it was principally owing to this precaution that the Piquots, finding her steps only within a short distance of their homes, imagined her mistress must have conveyed her a great part of her way, never once conceiving the true cause for the disappearance of the traces. Presently, however, it behoved her to be more cautious on another account, for the sound of voices met her ear. Approaching noiselessly, she became an interested, but unknown, auditor, to

the nefarious plan of Laborde for the destruction of his prisoner.

Here she remained, becoming perfectly acquainted with the designs of the plotters, until, by the breaking up of the conference, she was enabled to pursue her way in safety from observation; and in less time than it had taken either of those, with whose intents she had just become acquainted, she made her way out of the belt of forest that surrounded the huts, and came within sight of the lodges, the attention of whose inmates was so fully engrossed elsewhere, that they did not observe who approached them.

The Piquot village had been erected upon the summit of a hill, rising from the centre of a green plain, that was bounded upon one of its sides by a rather large streamlet, and surrounded, upon each of its other quarters, by a dark frowning wood. Its population was not large, and the whole of its ineffective force, women and children, were at present occupied with what was proceeding in the plain. Directing her eyes towards the same objects, he also became interested,

but in quite a different manner to the Piquot spectators. To explain this, we must return to Kennedy, whom we left quitting the concealed band of Iroquois.

Determined to lose no time, Frank had proceeded, guided by his ear, and some few observations he had made, direct, as he thought, towards the huts; but getting confused in his course, he did not arrive so quickly as the quantity of ground he passed over seemed to warrant him to expect: and it was not until he had twice gone over the necessary distance, that he arrived within sight of the desired object. The length of his walk had allowed time for the first effervescence of his passion to settle down into a calmer mood; and the woodsman began to consider, that, by putting himself into the power of his enemies he but destroyed his own hopes, and forwarded those of his rival. Besides, by thus removing himself, he left Maria perfectly unprotected, and in the Mohawk's power. Reflecting on this, he began very much to regret his precipitation, and to desire that it were in his

power to retrace his steps, without appearing to have been actuated by fear; or else, that fortune would throw something in his way, in the shape of a warrior or two, whose scalps would allow of his return without any reflection upon his manhood.

Whilst Frank was occupied with these thoughts, he perceived, as though fortune really this time desired to please him, the very thing for which he had been so ardently wishing. At the distance of about two hundred feet, under the shadow of a tree, which from its solitariness seemed to have been expelled the forest community, lay two warriors, who, having nothing else to do, were enjoying a comfortable nap.

At this sight, Kennedy could hardly restrain himself; he looked carefully around, and scrutinised every position wherein a troublesome spectator to his intended spoliation might be concealed. Alone did there appear cause for uneasiness in the proximity of the village; but in his opinion the few whom he perceived there, were otherwise occupied than in paying attention to

the sleep of the warriors, and without farther consideration—Frank never was noted for much —the borderer came to the resolution of making their sleep eternal.

Loosening his knife in its sheath, he first disencumbered himself of his rifle, and then placing his ear upon the ground, listened that he might assure himself his foemen's sleep was not counterfeited; but their regular and heavy breathings convinced him of its reality. After one more cautious examination, Kennedy commenced crawling and rolling towards what had excited his cupidity.

Unknown to Frank, a young maiden watched, from the interior of her father's lodge, the slumbers of her lover, and her heart beat quick with emotions of love and terror, when she perceived that what she had at first taken for another warrior, also reclining, had gradually approached him within a few feet.

She advanced towards the door, and bends the whole of her gaze upon the strange and uncertain object; she sees it move, slowly and stealthily

as the snake towards its prey; oh! that her lover would awake—that he were conscious of its approach—that he might feel if it meditated harm; shall she call her brother who is smoking before his lodge? No, for it may only be a friend intending to play some trick, perhaps to steal the weapons, or else to sound the war-whoop in his ears; and maiden modesty forbids her thus to declare the interest she feels for one; but now she screams, for love's eager glance had detected the gleam of the fatal knife, as the sun's rays flashed upon its polished blade, ere it plunged into the bosom she loved so well, severing and blighting for her all the joys of life, and which taught her the first bitter lesson she had ever received, of how agonising it is to part for ever from those who are dear to us. She sees not, she cares not, she heeds not, that her lover's companion in sleep has also been his companion to the land of shades—her brother is at her side, her fixed glance and outstretched arm, for speak she cannot, are sufficient to point out to the warrior some daring stranger, taking the scalps

of two of his nation; one loud whoop testifies his rage, and wakes into life, and summons from their quiet and repose, each warrior with its call to blood and vengeance, and almost instantaneously a number of the braves were rushing at full speed, desirous, if possible, of making the intruder pay dearly for his action.

This was the sight which had arrested the Onondaga widow, and formed the subject of such eager contemplation for the Piquots. The chase had now become one of thrilling interest, the chances of which appeared rather inclined towards Kennedy, inasmuch that, from his great start, it seemed probable he might regain the shelter of the wood before his pursuers could come near to him, and once there, it would not be very difficult to elude the latter.

Kennedy, as soon as he heard the cry by which he had been discovered, turned coolly round and perceived the Piquot warriors pouring forth towards him in one fierce cloud, as a hive of enraged bees; in place of being alarmed, and immediately seeking to fly, he finished scalping the

second warrior and then waited for about a minute to determine his course.

When he commenced his flight, in place of putting himself at first to great exertion, he contented himself with a quiet, regular pace, for the purpose of getting his breath into order, for he well knew whenever he should put forth his speed none would be able to come up with him, and he determined to reserve his powers until the Piquots should be within about a hundred yards. In this manner he approached the spot where he deposited his rifle, intending that his enemies should not chase him without his complimenting them, and that if they triumphed, some bitterness should be mingled in their cup of victory.

But a very few yards, and he would be in possession of the weapon that had so often proved fatal in his hands, and Frank could scarce avoid smiling, when he considered how effectually he would stop the speed of an Indian, who having headed his companions, was, as he thought, at a very fair distance for him to make an essay upon;

a score more yards, and in all probability, he would have laid the impetuous Piquot low, when to the woodsman's surprise, he heard, for he well knew its tones, the discharge of his own piece, and the whoop of rage and dissappointment that followed from the unseen foe.

The young woodsman, feeling certain it could be no friend that thus sent one of his own bullets so disagreeably nigh to his person, cast a rapid glance around; his pursuers were too near to allow of his hazarding a struggle with his new and unexpected adversary, whom he could now distinctly hear forcing his way through the bush, behind which he had been concealed; after a moment's hesitation, Kennedy had decided, and turning sharp round to the left, he proceeded upon that course as the only direction that seemed to offer an uninterrupted passage. Now fairly excited, the borderer strained every nerve to perform so glaring a feat, as to slay two warriors within sight of, and then to make his escape from, some of the bravest and fleetest of the Piquots.

Exerting himself to the utmost, he rapidly bounded away, and each second saw his pursuers farther behind.

One youth alone, young Tehasket, is bathing in the stream, and surely one so young will not dare to place himself in the way of a desperate man, armed and fleeing for his life; surely, naked and without weapons, he will not oppose himself to the ruthless man whose hands are still reeking with the blood of two of his nation. But little do they know Tehasket, that would reason thus; the blood pure, and without corruption to a descent from a line of warriors whose names were never sullied by the breath of fear, flows in his veins. He is the last, and, but his aged grandfather, the only descendant of the renowned chiefs of the "wolves of the Piquots," the bravest of the bands of that nation.

Often has his youthful heart beat to emulate the actions of his ancestors, and though, from his age—for scarce fifteen summers had Tehasket seen—he was precluded from association with the braves, yet, within him throbbed a heart as

courageous and as dauntless, as had ever animated the breasts of his fathers. Who was it but young Tehasket, when the panther, infuriated at the loss of its young, had followed upon the footsteps of their destroyer, and during the absence of the warriors, when none but women and children were in the lodges, kept prowling round the village, that, in spite of the tears of the dark eyed maiden Seetsebea, to whom alone he confided his intention, had, taking his father's bow, and girding on his knife in the wampum belt, sallied forth, and, with his youthful arm alone, slain the ferocious beast? Who could with him dash aside the glassy stream, or diving seize its swift tenants, even in their own element, or with rapid step as he run down on foot the fleet and timid deer? Four more moons, Tehasket would have been a warrior, and have gone forth upon the war-path, his father's weapons dealing destruction once again, among his own or his country's foes.

Loud were the cries of vexation of the Piquots when they found how vastly superior to them-

selves in speed was the agile borderer. They also feared, lest possessing equal cunning with swiftness, having once gained the wood, he would succeed also in baffling them, and would finally make his escape to boast over their tribe and of his own superiority.

Attracted by the noise, the young Piquot turned his head, and saw with surprise a white man fleeing from his people. At this sight his heart beat quicker, but not from fear. It was only the first ebullition of youthful pride and courage. He perceived in one single instant that the stranger was rapidly leaving his own countrymen behind. The honor, the glory to be gained by stopping the flyer in his course, when it defied the efforts of the best warriors of his nation, appeared at once. His blood leaped with hope, as imagination, with the swiftness of thought, represented what renown might be his. Raising, for the first time, the war-cry of his nation, the brave boy placed himself in the course of Kennedy, who, from his impetus, was unable, without considerable loss of the advan-

tage he had gained, even had he desired it, to move out of the direction he was pursuing.

"Fool!" exclaimed the young woodsman, who never expected for one moment that an unarmed boy, as the one before him, had the least intention of seriously opposing him; "fool! out of my way, or I'll give you a taste of my knife."

His fierce words altered not the intention of the lad. If the latter understood the language of the borderer, he neither answered, nor appeared dismayed, but bounded upon Kennedy, and from the shock both came to the ground. Seizing Frank by the leg, the young Piquot hindered him from rising. In vain did the former struggle, and seek to disengage his limb from the grasp of the other. He heard the rapidly approaching footsteps of the Indians, and their loud shouts of joy and of encouragement. In vain did he seek to unclasp the Piquot's hold by squeezing his wrists with all his strength; Tehasket appeared insensible to pain. He remembered how his fathers had suffered at the

stake, and he had vowed to imitate their endurance.

Enraged at what he regarded as being the foolhardy obstinacy of the lad, all Kennedy's passion mounted when he considered how the young Piquot was the only obstacle to obtaining renown, and how he would alike be deprived of honor and of love, through the agency of a mere boy. Drawing his knife, he waved it before the eyes of the youth, exclaiming in Indian, for he felt loth to slay one so young, though he had no compassion for manhood, "Let the Piquot boy leave go his hold of the rattlesnake, or it will bite him."

With perfect indifference did the lad listen to the threat of Kennedy; nor did it convey ought to intimidate him, or damp the fire of his bosom.

Seeing that his words had produced no effect, —irritated, and driven to desperation, Kennedy raised his knife, and drove it to the haft in the breast of the youth. Perceiving the blow coming, Tehasket neither shrank from, nor testified

the least emotion at, its infliction. Fixing his eyes upon the countenance of the borderer, he received the blow with the insensibility worthy of a long race of Indian Chiefs. No groan escaped his firm closed mouth; nor did there follow the least relaxation of his hold; but, as his life ebbed away, it tightened to the rigid grasp of death.

Thrice, and equally in vain, did Kennedy repeat his blow. Nearer could he hear his foes approach. One minute more, and, if he remained in his present situation, he would be their prisoner. Taking his knife firmly in his hands, he severed the wrists of the expiring youth. But the time he had lost proved fatal to him; and, as he rose, he found himself in the power of a Piquot, who flinging his arms around him held him, unable to defend himself, until the arrival of his comrades; who, with Indian self-control, spared him for the present, that they might have the pleasure of torturing him hereafter.

Not without interest had the Onondaga

woman been regarding the spectacle we have narrated; and with joy, at its conclusion, she perceived how precious to the nation had been the blood that day spilled. Feeling an inclination towards Kennedy, who had daringly destroyed three of the nation she so bitterly hated, she inwardly vowed he should not perish, but live to execute still more her long-nursed revenge upon the Piquots. Rapidly striding towards the woodsman who, with arms bound, and surrounded by a crowd of Indians, was being led towards the village, she made her way unquestioned, and unopposed through the subservient multitude, who, regarding her presence with horror, readily made her room to pass, and at a sign from her, retreated to a distance beyond earshot, forming around her and their prisoner a ring of terrified beings; and whilst she conversed, not one of the Indians present would have dared to draw down upon himself her dreaded vengeance by disobeying her commands, and entering within the circle.

"My son," she said, addressing Kennedy, "is fleet as a deer. His heart is fierce as the heart

of a panther. He smells sweet, for he smells of Piquot blood. Why did he leave the valley of Piquot bones where none of the nation I hate dare to be? Wherefore did he come to the lodges? Knew he not the Piquots were swift; or was he foolish, and fancied himself a buffalo among rats?"

"Why, old woman," replied Kennedy; "you see you don't exactly understand how the thing is. It's as hard for you to make out as Tasharah's talk is for me. I came down here to make a slap for the Major, and try to do what I had promised for Miss Maria. I suppose that red cheat of an Indian, who must be prying and listening to all one says, has told you all about it. Well, when I saw the two Piquots asleep under a tree, I just thought if I had their scalps that there would be two less to look after the Major: so I put my knife between their ribs to prevent them from waking; I'd got hold of their scalps all right and proper, when some one sets up a regular screeching, and I had to run for it. I suppose you saw that young rascal stop me?"

"The youth was a brave boy, and would have make a great warrior. My heart was glad when I saw that a mother of the Piquots would call for her son, and he would not hear her," said the old hag in a loud tone, her voice rising at the murderous pleasure she experienced, but quickly dropping it to a lower key, she continued: "Does not my son know that for the death of the young Tehasket the Piquots will tie him to a stake? Does he not fear to die?"

"What!" exclaimed Kennedy, in a rather excited tone, for he felt insulted at the question. "What! do you think I'm worse than a red Indian, and would care one bit more about a fire or burning than they do? No, no, if you think so, I can just tell you you're just in the wrong of it. Perhaps I might have liked it better had one of the whooping rascals knocked me over the head. It's much better to die like that than have a lot of ugly devils laughing at you all the while you're going. I'll tell you what it is, if they put me to one of their stakes, they shan't get

one more holloa out of me than out of their very best red-skins."

"My son talks well," said the old woman, "but he is young, and would not like to die. The lone woman will whisper in the ears of the young hunter, when the female sun shall have risen, and if he will listen to her, let him not fear; for is she not the servant of Athaensic, and will not her mistress tell her what to do, that the young man of the pale-faces may not die?"

"Why of course," replied Kennedy; "I shall be precious glad to get off; and as they say the devil helps you, I don't know but you mightn't be as good as your word. But mind! if that cheating, thieving Tasharah comes near me I'll tell the Piquots in no time where he is. I'd sooner by a great deal the Piquots should roast me than I should have to thank him for anything, and if he were to tell me I might be off I wouldn't budge.

"The strong arm of the Mohawks shall not strike for my son. A lone woman shall take council with Athaensic; and my son shall walk

from out of the lodges of the Piquots, as does a buffalo from the prairies. Only let him listen to the words of the lone woman of the valley of Piquot Bones."

Quitting the young borderer, the witch proceeded towards the place where Vernon was confined; and who had been listening with surprise to the late noise and confusion, entirely unable to account for it. First, from distinguishing the whoops of the Piquots to be those of war, he supposed that the Iroquois, having followed his captors, were now making an effort for his release by attacking the village; but when, after attentive listening, he could neither hear the fire-arms, with which he knew his friends were provided, nor their answering yells, that he felt confident they would not neglect to sound, and as he still continued to hear the tumult, that in place of abating seemed only to increase, he was convinced this idea must be wrong. After a fruitless attempt to satisfy his curiosity by the door, which had been repelled by a fierce sentinel, he seated himself, despairing of a solution,

upon some skins the politic Laborde had at first ordered to be provided for his comfort. Pushing aside the matting that served as a door, "the lone woman" entered his prison.

Surprised at the uncouth and forbidding aspect of his visitor, whose intentions he could not even guess, Vernon, after a few minutes' deliberation, came to the conclusion, that he beheld one, who had been sent to him either by the Piquots or Laborde, for some purpose of their own; and he immediately began considering of some plan, in case of his surmise proving true, by the which to get rid of her who had, without the formality of introduction, intruded upon him the benefit of her society. His eyes at this moment lighting on a pitcher of water, he determined, should she become troublesome, to empty its purifying contents over her, and this he calculated upon as a most effectual plan of ejectment. In place of the mummery he expected she would commence, and which he intended so quickly but ungallantly to put a stop to, the witch advanced, and addressed him in his own language:

"White head of the Yengese, let your heart be joyful, for your daughter is nigh. The fair maiden said to the lone woman, 'Sing to my father that his daughter is well, but men will not let her be with the old warrior.'"

Though this address was sufficiently intelligible, yet Vernon thought for some minutes. He was not a stranger to the tale concerning the priest of Athaensic and his widow; but he could not be certain the being now before him was the latter, nor credit that his daughter was near, and had employed her as her messenger. He feared some ruse of the cunning Laborde, and cautious not to commit himself, in any manner, he replied,

"I cannot conceive how my daughter can be near; and I had always thought the widow of the priest of Athaensic was too much of a foe to the Piquots ever to visit their lodges. Unless you can produce some evidence of the truth of your mission, and of your information, I cannot place any reliance upon it."

"They did not lie," replied the lone wo-

man, not in the least offended by the doubts Vernon had expressed, " who said, ' the white-headed warrior' is very cunning. He will not listen to a song that is not true. The dove knows the plumage of its young, and the Yengese will tell if this be the fair maiden's." Saying these words, she gave to the Major the bracelet, which the latter immediately recognised as belonging to Maria. Admitting at once her credentials, and having no longer reason to discredit the messenger's words, he eagerly enquired where and how was his child.

" Let not the Yengese warrior make a noise, like the foolish snake; for the Piquots have long ears," said the old woman, for in his excitement he had allowed himself to exceed the bounds of prudence: continuing, she observed, " But let him listen, silent as the watchful adder. In the valley of Piquot Bones is a maiden of the Yengese. When the Piquots stole her father, as he slept, and had taken him away, she became as the panther upon the trail of the hunter that has killed her young. The Piquots have said, the

white-headed warrior shall die, but the lone woman has said he shall live."

"She has followed, then, with the Iroquois, when I became a prisoner of the ungrateful Frenchman and his murderous savages?"

"The words of the Yengese are true," replied the old woman, but in an impatient manner, as though she had something else to communicate that she considered of more importance than replying to the Major's questions.

"She suffers not from her exposure and privations," said Vernon with the anxiety of a parent.

"Let the warrior listen," replied the witch. "His daughter is well; and let the Yengese Chief say, Would he hear the sound of her voice soon, or would he die at the stake?"

"What reason have you for asking such a question?" enquired Vernon, surprised that any one should consider him capable of hesitating between escaping or remaining as he was; and who could not understand why the alternative of the stake had been submitted to him: for he was en-

tirely ignorant of how, perfectly upon his own responsibility, Laborde had designed him to afford amusement to a portion of his Piquot friends in the flames of an Indian fire. "What reason have you for asking such a question? or what right to imagine, if I do not make my escape, that I shall be put to death? I am a prisoner of war; and, according to the usages practised by the whites, instead of slaying, must my captor —however much I am persuaded it is against his inclination—treat me with both care and respect. I do not understand from what you can infer, that he intends to violate this established rule."

"The Yengese," replied the witch, "knows not the ways of the cunning adder. The white man, the guest of the Piquots, has the heart of a panther, but the face of a deer. Listen! for a bird has sung to the lone woman. A stranger, a wicked warrior, and a deceitful priest have said together: 'We will call a council of the nation, and will say to the young men, 'shall we let the slayer of a Piquot, of a brother, live?'

And the deceitful priest will tell a lie, and say, 'Athaensic would that he should die.' Then will the Piquots prepare a stake, and the Yengese shall die."

"I really—" exclaimed Vernon, "though I know Laborde to be a perfect scoundrel, and wicked and base enough for anything, can hardly conceive how he would dare join in any conspiracy like this, or give his countenance to any plan for my destruction. He would not dare to do it, for ever afterwards he would be unable to maintain even his very slender reputation. What could he say at the close of the war—and it cannot last for ever—when it was desired of him where was Major Vernon, who had been his prisoner? He could not reply,—'I allowed my followers to murder him.'"

"Listen; the wolf is not so fierce, nor the old owl so cunning as the guest of the Piquots. When men shall say to him: 'where is the white headed chief?' he will say: 'could I help the arrow or tomahawk of battle? he is dead.'"

"There is no untruth but I feel confident he

is capable of inventing if he imagined he would gain the smallest tittle by it. But I do not perceive what is the benefit he would expect from my death, that he should be so industriously plotting it."

"When the hunter would slay the young of the eagle, he first slays the father. Let the Yengese be careful, and speak with the tongue of an adder, when the Piquots shall call him to the assembly of their nation. See, the sun has fallen into the distant lake, and the lone woman must go that she may look upon other lodges. But let not a warrior be as a dove, but be as the panther ready for his foes."

As the sorceress spoke she handed to Vernon a long, sharp knife or dagger, and before he could make any comment upon this gift, she was gone.

Placing the weapon within his breast, in spite of his opinion that it was far more suited for an assassin than an officer, he determined to get rid of it on the very first opportunity, and to conceal it until then, that he might not injure one that was serving him.

CHAPTER VII.

No ear has caught their stifled cry;
No friendly hand is near to save;
Welt'ring the stalwart warriors lie,
And none the avenging weapon wave.

They bowed beneath the power of sleep,
And still are they slumbering on;
But in oblivion far more deep,
And in bonds that are still more strong.

THE luminary of day was yet hesitating ere he took his plunge into the Pacific, as the Onondaga woman quitted the Major and directed her footsteps towards the lodge of the "chief mystery man," which she entered only a very few minutes after that personage, whose return home, when he had parted from his companions, had been impeded by his being compelled to perform some ceremony over the body of the young Te-

hasket, and also by his being called to attend a council hastily summoned and held for the purpose of considering how to dispose of the new prisoner, who had so signally and dreadfully afflicted the tribe; and he had now sought his home with the laudable view of performing his part of the lately formed contract, by obtaining from his mistress a trance, or in other words, get most decidedly drunk, that he might, by being so religiously disposed to silence, the better attend to and understand the commands of her whom he served.

The conjurer had seated himself upon his bed, and, as he considered himself—from having ordered that none should be admitted—to be secured from intrusion, he had taken out his bottle, and was about to convey it to his mouth, when he was startled by hearing a footstep, and looking up he recognised, with a sudden qualm of fear, the Onondaga woman; and good cause had the priest for knowing his visitor. Although himself a mere pretender to supernatural power, yet he never suspected that of the witch had no

firmer foundation than his own, and none believed more firmly in the power of the being before him than did Shohaske, the priest and imposter of "the wolves of the Piquots."

The reflection of the torch—for, invariably, previous to his debauches the sorcerer lighted a piece of pinewood, as a preservative, during his insensibility, against the very spirits with whom he pretended to hold friendly communion—as it shone upon the hag, caused her eyes to appear almost of a supernatural brightness, whilst they glared upon him through the long hair veil that concealed every other feature of her face. Her wild attire seemed still wilder from the sickly light produced by the fast fading twilight struggling with the beams of the flambeaux; and, as she stood before the conjurer, leaning upon her staff, she was regarded by him as a perfect personification of the power she served. The priest's breast, never at any time unassailable by fear, quaked within him at this unseemly and unlooked for visitation.

"Why?" at last enquired the old woman,

speaking in her hoarse, sepulchral tones; "why is the great mystery man of the Piquots like a frighted deer? Why is his heart as water? Does he not serve Athaensic, and will she not make him strong?"

"Shohaske," replied the conjurer, after a longer duration of silence than mere politeness required; "Shohaske is as an elk when the carcajon leaps upon his back. The mystery man of the Piquots thought that the lone woman was in the valley of Piquot bones."

"Athaensic has spoken to the lone woman, and said: 'The priest of the Piquots held a talk with the stranger among the lodges, and he will not tell what was said to him; go to him, for I have something to tell him.'"

"Some one has sung in the ears of Athaensic," replied the priest, who considered that this knowledge of his movements must, indeed, be divinely derived, and could only have been obtained by the old woman through her connection with the goddess, proceeded to excuse himself; and it may be necessary here to observe that the

interviews between the lone woman and the priest were far more frequent than the Piquots imagined. She was an unwelcome visitor to their lodges; and from having mingled the sorcerer's fear and interest together, she had hitherto been furnished by him with the most accurate information of all that occurred; but now the payments of Laborde having rendered him independent in some measure of her remuneration, and as, from not having seen her for a considerable time, his terror had begun to wear off, he had determined to keep his present understanding secret; but now her sudden appearance and knowledge of his most hidden intents had overthrown completely his new found courage, and restored to him all his former awe and dread. "Some one has sung in the ears of Athaensic. Shohaske would have come to the valley of the Piquot bones. But the panther asks not the wolf where is his prey. Does not the lone woman know all that Shohaske could tell her!"

"Athaensic," said the witch, in an impressive tone, that anything but decreased her com-

panion's fear, "is as the silent bird—she cares not to talk. She said once to the lone woman, there is a man among the Piquot lodges, and he loves the fire water of the whites; but I love better to be far distant, and among the storms, than to be talking with a woman. Let the Onondaga widow go to him, and he shall tell her what the Piquots say in their councils; and she shall speak what he tells her in the ears of the Mohawks, that the Piquots may die for slaying my priest. Then the 'lone woman' came to the lodges of the Piquots, and Shohaske was the man among them that loved to drink of the 'fire-water' of the white men; and the 'lone woman' gave him a pitcher, and filled it with 'strong water,' and he told her all that the Piquots said in their councils. Then was Athaensic revenged a little upon the slayers of her priest. When the stranger among the lodges said, 'I will fill your pitcher twice with the water of my people, the priest said, this hand is more open than the hand of the 'lone woman,' I will not tell her what I hear. But Athaensic whispered in the

ears of the 'lone woman,' If Shohaske wanted 'fire-water' was the hand of my daughter ever shut? If the priest of the Piquots shall again say in his heart I will not tell the words that I hear to the 'lone woman,' then shall he die, as did the slayers of the children of my daughter."

"Let the wise woman of the Onondagas speak," said the conjurer, happy if he could by any means evade the punishment of the deceit he had intended to practise; "the ears of Shohaske are open, and he listens."

"The mystery-man of the Piquots speaks now with the wisdom of an old owl: let him do as Athaensic bids him, and he shall not die; but if he does not, she will be very angry." Here the witch paused, to allow her words to produce more effect.

"Shohaske listens," said the terrified conjurer.

"Then let him hear, and remember the words of Athaensic. The Piquots will be at council to talk if the white-headed warrior shall die; then let the cunning mystery-man say as the stranger

among the lodges bid him; and let him say, that the young men must not see the old man die. Let him speak so that the braves shall return to look after the Mohawks, and to bury their dead. Let him do all this, and the face of Athaensic will be as the sky in the moon of flowers; nor shall the hand of the lone woman be shut, but be open as it is now." Here she produced a bladder filled with the darling beverage of the conjurer, a portion of which she gave to him, reserving the remainder for another purpose, to which she intended to apply it.

Quitting Shohaske, the witch entered the hut of the Mohawk prisoner who, perceiving her entrance, and recognising her as being the foe of his captors, and the friend of his own nation—knowing at the same time that he was to die upon the following day—not that he feared the pang of death, yet felt a hope spring up in his bosom that he might escape it. This passion manifesting itself upon his countenance, was immediately perceived by the hag, whose purpose had been the rather to prepare him to die, than

to encourage the desire for liberty—for as the vulture smells from afar the field of carnage, so did the witch conceive that the Indian's funeral pile might be the means of causing more of the blood she loved to flow—and speaking, she crushed the hope of the prisoner, before imagination had unfolded one of its leaves.

"Does a Mohawk fear to die? Has he forgotten to sing his 'death-song?' Will he become a girl, and put on the petticoats of the lone woman?"

"A Mohawk knows how to die," replied the Indian, without suffering a single sign to appear upon his countenance of how bitter was his disappointment.

"Does the Mohawk know that on the next sun a brave will be tortured?"

"A Mohawk can teach a Piquot girl not to cry. A Piquot cannot torture, for he know not how."

"My son is a warrior—he would like to die as a brave. Does he know how to strike with a knife?"

"Does the wild cat know how to use her teeth? Will not the buffalo strike with his horns? Let the wise woman give a knife to her son, and he will know how to strike a coward. Many of the Piquots should die."

"My son speaks as a warrior," said the old woman who, stooping, cut, with inconceivable quickness and address, the thongs which bound the Mohawk's arms; and restraining him as he was about to leap up, and convince his foes of his newly acquired power, and freedom, and perfect willingness to exercise himself, she said, "Let not my son be foolish. Let him lie as the cunning snake; but when the Piquots come to take him, then let him strike deadly as the rattlesnake. The strong arm of the Mohawk is nigh, and many of the Piquots shall be slain by his young men." Without noticing the Indian's joy that his death would be avenged, she gave to him the weapon with which she had freed him, and which he placed hastily out of sight.

As soon as the sorceress had passed from out of the sight of the guards of the Mohawk, she

advanced quietly and cautiously to where Kennedy was confined, and at the door of whose prison were seven stout, and stalwart warriors, whose waking watchfulness she knew it would be vain to seek to avoid, and whose vigilance it would be necessary to lull if she would free Kennedy without her mortal interference being known.

Having taken a survey of all the obstacles that opposed the execution of her project, the lone woman, retreating within a ruined lodge, waited until the proper moment should have arrived.

The guards were seated within a few yards of their prisoner's habitation, and were wiling away their time smoking, and listening to a tale of one of their companions, of which the Onondaga woman formed the theme; and, his imagination taking the reins, had caused the narrator to draw rather largely upon his fancy, and already had he invested his heroine with as much malignity, and power as the Metchi-Maniton herself. At this moment the excited minds of himself and

auditors were startled by hearing the fall of some heavy substance at no great distance; and one, having hastily arisen, proceeded to discover what it was, and returned bearing a bladder half filled with some liquid, and securely tied at the mouth.

Quickly was the fastening undone, and its contents submitted to the curious and careful scrutiny of the nose of the finder, but he liked not its odour, and passed it to another Piquot, who, more learned than his comrade, tasted with evident delight some of the rum it contained.

No longer ignorant of the gift that some favouring spirit had made to them—for in no other way could they account for their sudden acquisition, they knew no friend could, and did not imagine any enemy would, have conferred a like present—the Piquots passed their treasure from mouth to mouth, and gradually, but swiftly, did this foe to their race make his approaches, rapidly causing them, as his power increased, to draw near to the dangerous drifting ground of drunken forgetfulness. First losing

their taciturnity, the Indians broke forth into braggart and boast.

"Who is braver than Mehokanet?" said one; "or who a better hunter? He has slain more bears and buffalo than his fathers ever saw. In every cabin of the Mengwe they weep for the braves he has slain."

A second, whose senses were much farther gone, amid a multitude of hiccups, congratulated himself upon his skill and agility, and in the special honour done to him by the female sun showing herself double to his favoured eyes.

In the course of an hour from their first obtaining possession of the rum, the whole of the Piquots were stretched on the ground in drunken insensibility; then boldly quitting her hiding place, the "lone woman" stepped over their prostrate bodies and entered the lodge of the prisoner.

Frank had been bound with so much greater attention to his security than to his comfort, that he found himself alike unable to move or sleep, and at this moment his thoughts were equally

divided between cursing the Piquots and praying that the witch might perform her promise: and what resolutions he formed, if ever he should regain his liberty, of repaying, with interest upon his jailors, his present inconvenience. His delight may easily be imagined when he saw the person enter for whose appearance he had been wistfully looking ever since the moon had risen, and who was to him the harbinger of freedom.

Advancing to the borderer, the witch said in an under tone, "The lone woman has not sung in the ears of her son, 'the evil spirit of the night' looks down upon both her homes in the distant lakes, and she is here. Will my son listen to her words? Will he live, or will he die at the stake?"

"Why, old woman, you don't give much of a choice—now if it was between some hard dollars on the one side, and a good piece of clearing on the other, I might think a bit; but as it is, I'd sooner be off, if it's the same to you."

"Then let my son listen to my words. There are seven warriors at the door. Will he take

their scalps as he did those of the braves this morning?"

"I'd not mind doing it at all if I was able. But I wish you'd cut those precious thongs; I'd talk then as easy again."

"Let my son say," replied the witch; "will he slay the seven warriors at the door as he did the two this morning; and will he do as the lone woman bids him? If he say, yes, she will cut the thongs."

"I've said I wouldn't mind doing it, if I could; but you see it isn't quite so easy to take the scalp of an Indian when he's wide awake as when he's asleep. Before I could bring one of them down, the whole of the other six would be upon me, and that makes odds. However, I don't mind trying it, though I won't promise to do it. But you said there's something else, let's hear what it is."

"The warriors are heavy and dull as the stupid wee-wash-kish," said the witch, who felt loath to break the ground of her second requisition.

"They're asleep then? Drunk, I suppose you mean? I thought they were getting rather noisy just now. Well, you can say that's done; and now for the rest. But I wish you'd cut these cords, for they're making holes right into me."

"Let my son hear the words of the lone woman. Among the Piquots there is a man, and he is a war chief, and very old, for the snow of many winters remains upon his head. When he was young, he took an Onondaga, a priest of Athaensic, prisoner. Among the huts is the lodge of his son, the only branch of his old age, and to the young man there are two squaws and many children. Will my son take the scalps of the young brave, and of his squaws, and of his children, so that I may say to the old man you are leafless now as I am; you took from me my husband and children, and I have taken from you the sprout of your age. Let my son say he will do this, and the lone woman will cut his bonds."

With this she drew forth a knife, and, in case of acquiescence, prepared to fulfil her offer.

"That I won't," replied Kennedy; "I don't care two straws about taking the scalps of warriors, because they'd do the same by me if they could: but I won't touch the young ones to hurt them. Do you think I'm a screeching Indian, to go scalping women and children."

"Then, shall my son die at the stake," said the hag, who felt disappointed beyond description at this rebuff, which she had so little expected, and who still hoped to terrify the borderer, by fear of a dreadful death, into consent with her murderous design.

"I don't care if I do," replied the woodsman, "do you think I could ever look an honest man in the face, if I knew he could call me whenever he liked, 'baby scalp taker?' It's no use talking about it, for I won't do it, old woman, even if I could get off being tied to the stake twenty times."

Convinced by the earnest tones of the young man, that without some other inducement, it would be perfectly useless to attempt to persuade him to commit an act of which he professed such

utter abhorrence, the cunning hag determined to proceed upon another course; and as she knew of the rivalry between Frank and Tasharah, to seek to gain the performance of the deed through the former's affection for Maria. After a short pause she said,

"If the Piquots tie my son to the stake, what will become of the Yengese maiden?"

"I really do believe, old woman, all that they say about the devil helping you, for you've just hit me in the only place to make me wince; now suppose I did take the scalps of these babies, would that get the Major off, or be doing what I've promised for Miss Maria?"

"Let my son do as I have spoken, and he shall walk away with the white-headed chief to the valley of Piquot bones."

One instant's hesitation was all that Frank allowed himself before he replied to the witch, and then his tone and words left her not the smallest hope that he would waver in his resolution.

"Do you think if I was to be such a black-

guard as to kill a baby in its sleep, and was even to go back to the 'valley of Piquot bones,' as you call it, along with the Major, all safe and right, do you think Miss Maria would have me all hot and wet with a baby's blood? If she would I wouldn't have her, for if it pleased Heaven to give me children of my own, I could never look at them without thinking of those whose throats I had cut in the dark."

As Kennedy concluded, he could not repress a half shudder at the crime he considered himself tempted to perform.

The moon, by its light, which entered in a full flood into the hut, rendering everything distinctly visible, allowed the hag a moment's careful scrutiny of the countenance of the young woodsman, which was sufficient to convince her of the inutility of her efforts to induce him to act as she wished. Such a favourable opportunity for her revenge had not occurred before, nor seemed likely to present itself again; it was too late to change her instrument, and to place the knife in the hands of the Mohawk, and she de-

termined not to lose it, but to add a few more drops towards the filling of her cup. Consonant with this purpose, she addressed the borderer.

"Then, since my son will not let his knife drink of the blood of my enemies, will he be as the adder, when men speak of the death of the son of an old war chief, and the withering of his shoots?"

"I don't mind promising that," replied Kennedy, "for I can hold my tongue pretty well when it pleases me; and no one can say, that they ever told me a secret and asked me to be silent, but I wasn't quiet as a mouse."

Having obtained this promise from the young man, which, from his bold and open nature, she felt confident he would observe, the witch, to prevent farther delay, cut at once the bonds that fastened Frank's arms, and placed the knife in his hands.

CHAPTER VIII.

How oft has your nation trembled with fear;
When echoed my whoop on the wings of the night.
How oft have your braves, were Neholat near,
Turn'd them from his path, and swift was their flight;
And he struck those that fled, though swift as the wind,
For he ne'er met a foe that could look in his face,
Your Chiefs, too, he slew, they were thrust from behind,
For he's mighty in war, and swift in the race.

At an early hour of the day, and whilst the bright sun still lingered on his couch, reposing in some rocky cavern of the Atlantic, and delaying the eager, blushing, Aurora from unfolding the portals of the east, the sleeping Piquots were awoke by a loud, shrill whoop; and their rage, surprise, and grief can only be imagined, when they discovered the slaughter of their warriors, and the flight of their prisoner. In vain did

many of the young men seek for some marks or traces to guide them in the pursuit; but the same unaccountable, and supernatural power that had overthrown and destroyed seven of their warriors, the most renowned for their vigilance and strength, had also removed or concealed the faintest impression of the trail.

The same cause that awoke his hosts, also broke the slumbers of Laborde, and hastily rising, he proceeded to inquire the reason of the extraordinary tumult he witnessed; but when, with every mark of horror, an Indian had related to him the fearful event that had fallen upon his tribe, he was not long in imputing the authorship to the real actors in the bloody drama. As the deaths of the braves affected him but little, with regard to his own interests —for of pity and commiseration for other's woe Laborde had none—he remained not long among the terror-struck Indians, who surrounded the bodies of their friends, whom they imagined to have been slain by most unholy agency. Perceiving how the occurrence might be turned to

suit his own purposes, the Frenchman hurried towards the lodge of the conjurer, whom he found extended in sleep, and snoring from the effects of his potations, most inharmoniously.

After a considerable trial of patience and loss of time, Laborde succeeded in awakening him, and making him understand the startling news of which he was the bearer, and to which the priest listened with unconcealed alarm.

"What'" exclaimed Laborde, in French, when he perceived his companion partook of the terror of his countrymen; and who, having expected to hear the priest echo his own conclusions, could not comprehend how, being such an impostor himself, he could place reliance in the pretended power of others "Surely, you do not believe in this old witch, or give her credit for having more to do with the goddess Athaensic than you yourself have? To me, the explanation seems perfectly plain. She has sent the watchers to sleep in some manner, and then liberated the prisoner—for the which act I thank her not, as I feel towards him no great affection,

and had destined him to die with the Mohawk—and then, in all probability, he slew the guard, that she had disabled. How they managed it is of small consequence to us; all that we have to do is to turn these deaths to our own advantage. Your countrymen will soon be here, and you can pretend to them, as you already often have, that Athaensic has spoken with you, and told you, that she slew these warriors because the other prisoner, Major Vernon, was allowed to live after having slain a Piquot. Quick, recover yourself; there is nothing so very dreadful after all."

Although Shohaske knew much better than Laborde, that the old woman was the prime mover, if not actress, in the deaths of the braves, yet he was so far from having his terror lessened by this circumstance, that it became increased, and he now regarded her with even greater awe and fear; for, in no other way, in his opinion, but through the instrumentality of unearthly power had the prisoner been liberated, and his countrymen slain.

Perceiving the hesitation of the priest, and

fearful that his cowardice would mar his plan, Laborde said, "The heart of the conjurer is weak—let him take some of the fire-water."

Agreeably to this advice, and in the giving of which Laborde showed his knowledge of physic, the conjurer swallowed a large quantity of spirits, and thus fortified, lent a readier ear to the suggestions of his fellow plotter, and the latter persuaded him to do all that he desired. But so much time had been lost whilst he was thus engaged, that his unobserved retreat had been cut off; since, being anxious to know what had been revealed to their priest during his trance, the Indians had surrounded the lodge. Their entrance being hindered by an odd deformed lad who served the conjurer, for though the Frenchman could pass whenever he pleased, yet Shohaske was far too cunning to allow this grace to the vulgar. With anxiety the Piquots awaited to know what revelations had been made by the goddess, whilst the priest and Laborde were actually cozening them. The former having on the preceding night publicly declared, that he

felt an itching in the palm of his hand, the certain indication of an approaching communication.

"Now," said Laborde, when he had finished arranging the coming imposture, "have you any place where I can conceal myself, for it will not appear proper that I should have been with you thus early?"

"Let the stranger enter among the skins," replied Shohaske. Laborde obeyed, and was immediately covered and concealed. Taking a rather long draught from his store, the priest then commanded that those who were waiting without should be admitted, and presently about half a score of Chiefs entered the room in which Shohaske was counterfeiting sleep, whilst the remainder, or rather as many as could, crowded into the outer apartment.

After a few minutes, Shohaske began to groan, and to roll himself, as an accompaniment, from side to side, which motion he gradually increased until it attained the greatest rapidity, and it had become almost painful to look at him.

Then he suddenly rested, motionless. Raising himself, he now assumed the attitude of one sitting in council, and commenced talking in a perfectly unintelligible manner, which those present imagined was his conversation with Athaensic. After this had lasted for a short time, he began imitating the actions of a warrior looking for the traces of his enemy, and keeping his eyes shut, he thrice circled the room; and on returning to where he had first been, he flung himself upon the ground, clenching his teeth, rolling his body, and foaming at the mouth, as though he were seized with convulsions. The lad we have mentioned before, knowing his part, now came forwards, and poured some dark coloured liquid down his master's throat, to counteract the effect of the latter's malady, and one or two present recognised the indignant power of the deities, in making the said liquid smell very much like rum.

Gradually, as though from a deep sleep, did the conjurer appear to awaken; and rising, his eyes rolling wildly from the effects of his vision, he uttered aloud,

" Men of the Piquots, the face of Athaensic is very cloudy. It is turned away, and hid from your nation. She is very angry, for warriors have become women, and a nation of braves afraid to look upon blood. The white-headed warrior of the Yengese still lives. He, who slew a warrior with the little lightning, has not been told to sing his death-song. The great spirit of the storms, and of the angry waters, has said, ' Shall I let a nation of cowards live? No! for I will slay them.' Let the chiefs seek, and see if Shohaske has sung in their ears. Athaensic will kill their warriors upon the hunt, upon the war-path, and in their lodges: all their young branches shall die—their oldest braves will be leafless, for the tender branches shall be cut in their sleep."

Here the priest was interrupted, by hearing repeated the wailing cry of the morning; and, desirous of knowing what new misfortune had occurred, in spite of Indian reserve and insensibility, all his auditors quitted the imposter; and hurrying to the spot, whence the cry had arisen,

were nigh petrified with horror, when, on enterlng the hut of Mehohasket, the son of the old war-chief, they found him, and his entire family, slain by some unknown hand. The warrior, the children, and the mother, alike dead and scalped.

We will pass over the scene of rage and of fury that ensued—it would be vain to seek to describe it—and will only observe, that, in proportion as the Indian generally appears stoical and immovable, so, when his passions burst their bounds, does he become lost to all self-control, and deprived of all power of either governing or restraining himself in the smallest degree.

According to the plot that had been arranged, an assembly of the tribe, previous to the death of the Mohawk, was called for the purpose of deciding upon the fate of the Major. Laborde, listening to the suggestions of the priests, agreed to absent himself during the debate, under pretence of proceeding to examine the neighbourhood for their escaped prisoner, and he succeeded in persuading many warriors, whose

voices would have been for mercy, to accompany him; but in his attempt to procure followers in a search of the valley of the Piquot bones, and of the dwelling of the lone woman, he most signally failed. None could he find of sufficient daring to join him in such an expedition.

Meanwhile the council of the Piquots was held, and the discussion as to the disposal of the Major proceeded with a gravity that showed, whatever should be the result, it would be seriously adhered to. Shohaske first spoke, and formally declared the commands of the dreaded and powerful goddess, Athaensic, threatening with all the weight of her displeasure, the "tribe of the wolves" if they listened not to her wishes. Sarnagooke artfully sought to excite the passions of his auditors by recounting the inflictions under which they were still suffering, and by reminding them of the necessity of immolating some victim to the manes of their slain countrymen. With these two it was soon evident that the majority coincided, although some orators exerted themselves to show the impolicy of the

measure they recommended. Their opposition was useless, and success crowned the combined eloquence of the warrior and the priest.

The greater portion of the Piquots, alarmed at the threats of Shohaske, or excited by the language of Sarnagooke, acceded implicitly to the quisitions of Athaensic, as they were explained to them by the first, and determined that the sacrifice of Vernon should be performed as she had desired. The conjurer, remembering the directions of the "lone woman," having declared that the ceremony would be incomplete if the young men were to witness the death of the officer; it was also resolved that the latter, after having been present at the torture of the Mohawk, should proceed to recover the bodies of their slain, and wreak some vengeance on their enemies.

There being now no longer anything to discuss, the assembly dispersed itself, and almost immediately afterwards Laborde returned from his expedition, that had of necessity been unsuccessful, as the search had not been extended to

whither the Frenchman felt confident the prisoner was harboured. Being informed by his ready instrument of how well their plot had proceeded, he hurried to where Vernon had been led back, for the purpose of discovering if he had brought the latter by his condemnation nearer to acquiescence in his wishes.

Laborde remained silent for a few minutes after his entrance, but as he found himself neither noticed nor addressed, he was constrained to open the conversation, and advancing close to the Major, with sembled concern, he said, "I cannot express how grieved I feel that I was compelled to be absent from the late assembly of the Piquots; yet do not allow their determination to affect you in the least, for I have sufficient money to procure its being rescinded."

"You are ever the same," replied Vernon who, until interrupted by his visitor had been employing his thoughts upon other matters. "Pray, with what new villany do you come to annoy me? I suppose that you will attempt to per-

suade me my present situation is not the result of your machinations?"

"It is your language, ever of the same insulting description," replied Laborde, who considered it best to adopt a high tone, "that has driven me to my present course. Had you listened to, or treated in other manner than you did the reasonable proposal I made to you, this never would have occurred."

"What proposition mean you?" Vernon inquired, seeking, as far as his confused condition would permit, to look into his visitor's face for the purpose of discovering if the latter were jesting.

"Surely, Major Vernon," said Laborde, affecting surprise at the question of his prisoner, "you cannot descend to a falsehood, and pretending a forgetfulness of our recent conversation, compel me to return to a subject which you must be well aware is so painful and disagreeable to myself?"

"In your present conduct," observed the Ma-

jor, "I but discover the same baseness that has actuated you on all other occasions; well aware, that from my situation as a prisoner, I cannot reply to you in the way it would behove me to do as a British officer, you take this dishonorable method of exulting over me; but think not that your conduct can be concealed, or that you can escape the odium and detestation of the world."

"It appears to me," replied the dissembler, "that I was mistaken in supposing your forgetfulness to be assumed concerning my proposition, but allow me before recurring to that subject, to remove from your mind, the very unjust suspicions you have formed in accusing me of being the author of the late unhappy resolution of the Piquots, during whose discussion I was compelled to be absent, or else, I am persuaded that my authority would have procured them to adopt quite another course."

"I have allowed you to complete your observations," said Vernon, "merely to convince you how perfectly I am acquainted with your cha-

racter, and how well aware I am of the active part you have taken in the late proceedings of the Indians, as well as how useless is all further dissembling; I have a friend here who has informed me of your intrigues with the priest, and with the warrior; but do not let this discovery distress you," he continued, whilst an ironical smile crossed his countenance, "for it has not in the least lessened you in my opinion, or diminished my respect for your veracity."

Laborde was perfectly unprepared for this. He not only believed, but felt confident that Vernon was ignorant of his plot, and was now thoroughly confounded to find him acquainted with it. In vain he sought to fix upon which of his coadjutors had played the part of traitor, for he imagined that none but Sarnagooke and Shohaske knew of the part he had acted, and therefore it must be one of these that had betrayed him. After some thought, from knowing the character of the priest he suspected him.

"Major Vernon," said Laborde, throwing off all reserve, and speaking as near his true cha-

racter as his deceitful nature would permit, "since in some unaccountable manner you have become master of my secret, you have rendered it useless for me farther to preserve my mask, and I now throw it aside as some worn out garment. You are perfectly right, for purposes of my own, you were condemned to die, but I have already informed you, I can procure this determination to be set aside, if you will perform what I have required of you. Send to your daughter—desire her to come hither, so that I may have an opportunity of removing the unfavorable impression created by my former conduct, and you shall in no means have cause to regret your confidence."

"Never," replied Vernon, "will I be guilty of such criminal conduct, as to exercise my parental authority so as to induce my daughter to come hither, and place herself in your power; I would, if it were possible, send her my express commands to the contrary."

"Remember the alternative, it is the presence of your daughter, or death. But wherefore do

you refuse? Have I not pledged myself she shall be free to come and go as she pleases? The sole reason that I desire her presence is, that I may be able, from a course of assiduous attentions to her slightest wants, to reconcile myself to her, and remove what unfavorable impressions she has received concerning me, and you know that a woman's heart may thus be won."

"You have pledged yourself!" exclaimed the Major, in a tone of indignation and of scorn, "you give your word with as much ease as though you knew not how well aware I am of the valueless nature of all your protestations; why throw you not off the whole of the mask, as you term the attempted concealment of your villany, and speaking in your true character, say: Major Vernon, your daughter has excited my appetite, and I suspect, that after having been a soldier for a considerable portion of your life, and exposed to all the dangers and vicissitudes of military campaigning, now, in your old age, in place of preparing for death that is inevitable, you begin to fear what you have so often braved, and to

escape it, will you become a pander to my lusts, and deliver up your daughter to a fate, that ought to be to every parent more agonising than death in any shape, were it ten times more cruel and tormenting than man could invent? Speak to me thus, and I shall be able to understand you better, for it seems to me not only unnatural but disgusting, for a villain to speak with the tongue of honesty."

"I had thought I spoke sufficiently plain to have satisfied any fastidiousness even so great as your own," replied Laborde, whilst the flush upon his countenance, that succeeded to livid paleness, told how decided was his mind upon Vernon's death. I will, however, if you wish it, repeat my words; either give to me your daughter—and have you not the right to dispose of that which owes its very existence to yourself?—give her to me, or die."

"Then," said the Major, "I will answer you in the same unhesitating manner; I never will be guilty of saving my useless life by such means."

"It is an Indian death you brave; but perhaps you are ignorant of the tortures that a prisoner endures at the stake."

"Were it a thousand deaths," replied the Major, "my answer would ever be the same."

"You may consider so now," observed Laborde, with a sneer of incredulity, "but I have taken care you shall be witness to the death of a fellow prisoner, after which you can tell me if your resolution has been shaken."

"It is fixed and unalterable, as your own heart is deceitful and wicked," said Vernon. Laborde heard not this, for a sudden tumult and loud cries had attracted his attention; and fearful, from his knowledge of the violent opinions that divided the Piquots—for the warriors whom he had hindered from voting, by persuading to accompany him in the morning, had openly declared their dissatisfaction at his ruse—that some difference had arisen, and that the two parties were settling their dispute *vi et armis*, he hurried away, well pleased at having an excuse to terminate the conversation, and also,

for the purpose of satisfying his fears and his curiosity.

Feeling disappointed at not being permitted to join in the amusement of the Major's death, the Piquots had unanimously determined to render the Mohawk's as pleasurable to themselves, and disagreeable to their prisoner, as possible; and, to prevent delay, had, immediately after the assembly was dissolved, commenced making their preparations.

Whilst some arranged and put into order the necessary instruments, the remainder proceeded to their captive's lodge, that they might congratulate him upon his approaching immolation; and each of the Piquots tried his best at description of the intended torments, that the Mohawk might betray some indication of fear or of impatience; for not only has an Indian, about to die thus, to appear perfectly indifferent to bodily pain, but must also observe the utmost composure and decorum concerning his foeman's conduct and language.

The Mohawk listened to their words, and to

their boastful speeches, with so much unconcern, that it would almost seem he was ignorant of the language in which he was addressed, or that he considered them no more; and placed as much credit in their most savage and threatening expressions, as he did in the summer wind that played among his native forests. When his enemies spoke of and asserted their superiority over his own nation, little did they think that the haft of the knife, the gift of the lone woman, was so firmly grasped, or how easily it was in his power to lay the vain boaster low; but it was not yet the time, and, whilst his foes were regaling their imaginations upon a fancied series of groans and cries, that they hoped and anticipated the Mohawk would indulge them with, their prisoner was feasting his upon the consternation, and slaughter he would both cause and create, when his weapon should be displayed; and how viciously, whilst a Piquot was informing him of the scalps he had taken, and how his father had terrified all the Iroquois tribes, did he consider into which part of the orator's person would it

be best to place his knife, so as to procure a speedy junction between the son and his deceased father, in the land of souls.

A warrior now entered, who having, by his activity and exertions, considerably aided the rapid preparation of the requisites for the day's amusements, came to summon the attendance of the individual, for whose any thing but pleasure he had been so zealously labouring.

"Mohawk girl, a Piquot has made a fire. Your legs are cold. Let an Iroquois warm his feet at the stake of my nation."

For the first time the Mohawk spoke; and darting a look of fierceness towards him who had addressed him, said, "The Piquots are owls—how can they look on a fire? They have lit a torch, and they think that this is a fire to frighten a warrior by, and make one afraid, who can look as the eagle in the face of the sun. Where is Mishpohat? Neholat saw a Piquot cry in a Mohawk fire."

"Tatomah shall see a wounded deer. Will the Mohawk dance?" enquired the Piquot with

a sneer. "Tatomah will put thorns in his feet."

"Can the Piquot boaster look in the face of a warrior?" said the Mohawk, stretching forth his neck. "No; he cannot, for he would be dazzled."

Complying with this challenge, the Piquot approached his prisoner, and commenced staring him full in the face, for the purpose of discovering which was the braver, he, who blinked first being considered vanquished.

"Is the Piquot afraid?" said the Mohawk, when he perceived his opponent was not sufficiently near, and who desired to draw him closer. "Does he think an Iroquois is a rattlesnake, and will bite him?"

"Tatomah knows that the Mengwe are doves, and that they cannot bite," replied the Indian to the taunt of his enemy, as he placed his face, without suspicion, close to that of the other.

"Neholat is an eagle of war, and his bite is fierce," exclaimed the Indian; and, as he spoke, with a movement so sudden, that the other,

being completely unprepared, could neither avoid nor parry the blow, he buried his knife to the haft in the bosom of his foe.

"Tell your father," he continued, leaping upon the bewildered Indians, and striking them indiscriminately; but now replying, as he gave each fatal blow, to their late inconsiderate boasts, "How is it a Mohawk uses his knife?" "Was your hatchet upon your first path as sharp as this?" he said to a second. "The hand of a Mohawk girl is very strong. The arm of a Piquot warrior cannot strike deeper," he observed to a third.

None of the Piquots stopped to reply; but, terrified at this sudden attack, hurried to quit the lodge as quickly as possible; and, yielding to the sudden tumult, all sought to make their exit at once: but, as near twenty individuals could not pass together through an entrance only sufficiently large for two, at the utmost, the Mohawk struck them at his pleasure, and ere a few minutes had passed the latter remained sole master and occupier of his enemies' lodge; half

a score of bodies attesting to his zeal and expedition, as, from but one wound, had ebbed the life of the stoutest warrior. Before the Piquots had rallied and surrounded the lodge, he had dexterously deprived of their scalps many of those, who, a few minutes past, had boasted so over himself, devoting him to what, they little thought, was so soon to become their own portion.

When Laborde arrived, he found the Indians assembled around what had so late been the prison, but had now become the fortress of their self-liberated foe, and furious were they in their shouts, as they dared him to come forth, and quit his home, so truly become his castle. Having destined the Mohawk to the stake, they liked not to be disappointed by slaying him, as they easily might, by the aid of fire-arms, yet the boldest warrior hesitated to attempt an entrance by the door, the danger of such an undertaking being too apparent.

"Has a wolf stolen among the buffaloes?" inquired a young brave. "If a warrior be

within the lodge let him come forth—a Piquot would look him in the face."

"Let the Piquot look in the face of a girl," replied the cunning Mohawk, who was far too well acquainted with the strength of his position to think of quitting it, but was desirous of provoking his enemies to make an attack upon him, where he would possess such evident advantages; and, as he spoke, having previously decapitated one of the slain Piquots, he flung the scalpless head into the face of the speaker that had just addressed him.

Enraged at this action, the Piquot sprung forwards, determined to revenge both the insult towards himself, and the deaths of his countrymen, though at the certain risk of his own life; and, as might have been expected, the Mohawk's ready knife greeted him in the doorway, and added him to the list of slain.

"Does the Mohawk bite as the rattlesnake or as the dove?" exultingly inquired the victorious Indian, flinging forth, as he spoke, another mutilated head, with the same design as before,

but none were, this time, rash enough to brave almost certain destruction.

At this juncture, Laborde and the Piquots recognised the approaching Sarnagooke, and though the first did not join in the loud shout of welcome, with which the presence of the latter was hailed—for the Indians, well knowing his great strength, courage, and sagacity, considered that he would quickly unhouse the foe that had thrown down the gauntlet to the whole of their nation—yet he perfectly shared in their feelings, for nothing would have deranged his plans more than that the Mohawk should not undergo the torture. Were the Indian to be slain, then all the effect he hoped to produce upon the Major, by the sufferings of his fellow prisoner, would be lost.

Sarnagooke directly comprehended the nature of the task his tribe expected, and called upon him to perform. Passing through the crowd that willingly made way for him, he approached the entrance of the lodge, and, addressing its occupant, said:

"Let an Iroquois dog come forth—a Piquot would look upon a girl. How dares a coward of a Mengwe be among the lodges of my people?"

"Will not a Piquot warrior enter his own lodge?" replied the Mohawk, who hoped that his enemy would be bold enough to accept his invitation. "Is a warrior afraid of a Mohawk dog? Let my brother bid his squaw bring some wood—an Iroquois has taken scalps and would dry them in the smoke. See how red, and how sharp is a knife of one of the braves of the Mengwe." As he spoke, the Indian, elated by his good fortune, incautiously protruded his arm beyond the entrance. It was but an instant he was in this position, but it was sufficiently long for Sarnagooke to profit by it. With a bound, the latter cleared the intervening space, and seized the wrist of the hand that shook the threatening weapon.

To the eyes and the ears of the Piquots all had now ceased to be distinguishable The two warriors rolled, and struggled together, without

either seeming to possess the advantage. Once the Mohawk appeared above his adversary, his teeth fixed in the latter's chin; but a sudden exertion of the Piquot displaced him, and the struggle recommenced.

Laborde was the first to recover from the stupefaction into which the sudden act of Sarnagooke, and the interest with which the ensuing conflict was viewed, had plunged the spectators; and springing forwards, he arrived just as the Piquot warrior had vanquished, for now Sarnagooke held beneath him the faintly struggling and exhausted Mohawk.

Secured, the prisoner was led to the stake, a long post fixed in the ground, and to which he was bound. According to custom, the Major, as he was destined to the same fate on the following day, was led from his hut to be a witness to the pains of his fellow prisoner, and the sports of the day commenced.

As it was her right, advanced an old and frightful woman, who bore in her hands a flaming piece of wood, that she pressed against the

prisoner's thighs, looking the while in his face for some indication of pain; but his countenance was as unmoved, and his eyes as rigidly fixed upon the heavens, as though no fire were nigh, or that he were ignorant of the beginning of his torture. Seeing her plan had failed, striking him with the burning billet, and uttering a cry of rage at her disappointment, the hag withdrew, resigning her place to a warrior.

"Wilt thou weep, Mohawk girl?" said the second torturer, waving before the prisóner's face a branch of that bush that bears the weapon with which to assail a warrior's manhood; and the Piquot hoped the sight of the instrument would cause the captive's resolution to fail; but the hope was fallacious. Selecting four thorns, all that was allowed him, he thrust one into the fleshy and inner part of the Indian's arm, but the latter shrank not. A second he ran into the tender part of the thighs, but still it was in vain; and now, fearing that he would not have the honour of subduing the insensibility of his obstinate foe, he considered for a while, and then

placed another in the upper part of the Mokawk's stomach, but not a contraction of a muscle betrayed the latter knew anything of his enemy's attempt. Finding himself once again unsuccessful, the torturer taking his last hope, pressed it slowly and gradually into the lower part of the other's abdomen, anxiously watching for only a compression of the Mohawk's lips that might show he suffered.

Four Piquots followed each other, availing themselves of the same weapons as the preceding, and attempted to overcome the endurance of the tortured, thrusting their weapons into the most susceptible parts of his frame, but they were obliged to confess that the prisoner endured as a warrior, and they retreated from their attempts, among their surrounding countrymen ashamed of their ill-success, yielding their place to a chief, who, bearing a pan of ashes, placed them upon the head, shoulders, and feet of the Mohawk that the latter might, by shrinking, allow the fiery load to drop to the ground; for it was only now by signs and not by words, that the Piquots

considered they could in the least hope to obtain from their captive any indication of pain, and might thus escape the future taunts of their enemies, an Indian being as proud of his dexterity in torturing as of any other of his qualifications.

He was followed by another, who, having a piece of red-hot wire, thrust it through the cheeks of the Iroquois, and burned the latter vainly on different parts of his body.

All these plans having failed, an old Indian advanced having three splinters of a light inflamable wood. These, having been inserted, one in the breest, another in the stomach, and a third in the thighs, were ignited, and burned with a steady fierce heat. But the Mohawk, keeping his eyes fixed on the spot in the heavens whither he had first directed his gaze, moved not a limb, nor changed his position until they were extinguished in his blood.

Astonished, and unable to refrain from admiration and wonder at his heroic bearing, the Piquots became more than ever desirous of

causing their prisoner to succumb, and for this purpose a hasty consultation of those privileged to torture was held, during which many most refined measures of Indian cruelty were mentioned and debated upon, the uncertainty being from such a medley, which to prefer.

Whilst they were discussing, the Mohawk, whose fierce pride had sustained him, broke silence, and addressed his tormentors.

"When will a nation of cowards, and of women, begin to torture? An Iroquois has been tied to their stake whilst the sun has moved far. He laughs at the Piquots. Let them begin."

The spectators listened with respect to the words of one whose powers of endurance—that desideratum for an Indian—were so great, and not one considered himself entitled to reply, but watched with interest what Sarnagooke was proceeding to perform, conscious that if expressions of pain could be obtained he would extract them.

The Mohawk, hearing the Indian's approach, bent his gaze once more upon vacancy, and prepared himself for the coming infliction.

Sarnagooke commenced with making upon the captive's body several long and pretty deep gashes. Waiting for an instant he watched to see if the Mohawk quailed, but the latter appeared as indifferent as ever. He then beckoned a Piquot to approach, who bore a pan containing gums and fat, that had been melted together, and were now in a boiling liquid state. Summoning the whole of his fortitude and resolution to his aid, the warrior suffered without a murmur escaping him, the excruciating agony of having this mixture poured into his fresh and gaping wounds.

"Dog of the Mengwe," exclaimed the infuriated Indian, when he found himself thus foiled, "What dost thou see? Look upon the ground as a timid hare. It is only warriors and the eagle that look in the heavens."

"Piquot girl!" replied the Mohawk, his lips alone moving as he spoke; "Neholat sees an eagle of war, and he knows that the leaping panther of the Iroquois, the strong arm of the

Mohawk is nigh. How will your nation cry at the stake of my people?"

"The Mohawk lies," said the Piquot. "If a Mengwe can speak the truth, let him tell in the ears of Sarnagooke what he sees."

"Red men," the Mohawk replied, and his countenance changed all at once from an expression of proud endurance to one of pleasure and of joy, and he stretched forth his face as though he saw something in the heavens. "There are all the fathers of my tribe, and the Great Spirit is with them, and there is Helahtdee, a maiden of the Senecas, who died in the moon of flowers, and her face is as was the sky when the Great Maniton called her to the happy lands."

Here he paused as if to allow his soul to dwell upon this picture, and then turned his eyes beaming with a wild unearthly light, as though filled with the spirit of another world, full upon the astonished Indian, who with his knife in one hand, and the pan containing the torturing mixture in the other, was listening to his words in

wonderment. He gazed upon his tormentor for an instant. Gradually the expression of his eyes turned to that of scorn and pride; their brightness faded; his head sunk upon his breast, and the Mohawk's spirit parted for an eternal home.

CHAPTER IX.

The hour is come:
The very sentry sleeps: each watch-dog's dumb.
Deep is the silence, that is broke alone
By the sad breathings of the night-wind's moan.
But, what dark spirits flit through yonder grove.
So oft resonant to the tones of love?
Their hostile crests wave to the air of night;
Their weapons glitter in the moon-beams light;
Their pace is stealthy. Oft the searching eye
Regards the covert where a foe might lie.
Now, on the forest's margin, now, they stand
Betray'd to view, a threat'ning, desp'rate band.
They gather as the storm—their ranks they close,
Then spread to where the hostile clans repose.

HOWEVER much the Piquots were grieved at not being able to extort from their prisoner a single manifestation of pain, they did not sorrow alone, for Laborde felt equally disappointed. He had calculated upon the Mohawk's torments producing from the sufferer cries of agony, whereas

he had not given the slightest indication of feeling, and he feared that the Major's resolution, in place of being weakened, would, on the contrary, be strengthened by the exhibition of endurance and resolution, that he had been compelled to be a witness to. On this account, most heartily he cursed the Mohawk and his pride.

The moment for the departure of the warriors rapidly drew nigh, and the sun required but a few minutes before he should fall into the outstretched arms of Thetis; and little thought the wolves of the Piquots, that this was the last expedition of their tribe that he would ever shine upon; as, collected together, the young men delivered up their Manitons to the priest, who was to accompany them; and, still less imagined a few others, who stole away from their companions to say their short adieus to some bright-eyed maid, that the separation, after farewell was said, was marked to be eternal.

Finding the time almost arrived, when he must either leave the surviving prisoner to his fate, or make a trial of his power to see how long

he could put off his execution—for Laborde, had he been able, would never have thought of procuring the sentence to be rescinded, as he considered him, from being so well acquainted with his character, far too dangerous an individual to be permitted to live—the Frenchman entered for the last time the lodge of the Major. The latter, expecting the visit, had been awaiting his coming, as he doubted not that his captor would observe the promise he had made, of seeing him once again, to discover if his resolution had been shaken. Immediately he perceived him, he spoke, saying,

"Do you think that the murderous exhibition you have forced me to be a witness to has, in in the least, caused me to waver in my resolution of the morning? On the contrary, the death of that brave savage has taught me, if I hesitated in the smallest particle before, what was my duty."

"Really, Major Vernon," replied Laborde, with unaffected concern, "nothing more truly grieves me than your adherence to this resolu-

tion. I feel sorry, that the stubborn obstinacy of the Mohawk may have given you room to doubt the terrible pangs of the death you brave. Would it not be preferable to accept my terms, and live to be a service to your country, than, by adhering to a principle, that the world, with its usual disregard to circumstances and selfish tyranny has imposed, uselessly to throw away your life?"

"Had you the least penetration, you would long ago have discovered, how perfectly unavailing are all your attempts to force me to such a crime, as to preserve my life by the sacrifice of my daughter's honour," said the Major, in as calm and positive a manner as he could assume. "You may destroy me: I do not wish to deny that I am perfectly in your power; but you will not be able to conceal the disgraceful deed, and how will you be able to account for such an act?"

"Indeed!" replied Laborde, sneeringly. "I feel vastly obliged to you, for the attention that you pay to the preservation of my honour: but

I have taken good care, that Major Vernon—since he so obstinately prefers a painful death, and regards with such horror the smallest infringement of the nice and delicate morals of the world—shall attempt, during my absence on an expedition, to make his escape, by breaking the parole I had granted to him, and suborning my followers by the money with which I had generously provided him; and that they, enraged at his perfidy and ignorant of European customs, sacrificed him to their resentment. This is the pretty tale I shall spread abroad; and the just and considerate world, for whose opinions you are about to sacrifice yourself, will, whilst it exculpates me, wonder how it could have been so thoroughly deceived, as to consider you incapable of such baseness."

For some minutes Vernon could not reply, so astounded was he at the coolness with which Laborde announced his intention of promulgating this falsehood; and he could not conceal from himself, that it might easily be made to assume an appearance of truth. Presently, however, he

gave his indignation vent in the following words:

"For something like this, I was not entirely unprepared: a communication I have had with a friend had led me to expect it; but I must confess, that your bold effrontery exceeds every thing of which I could form an idea. Supposing, however, that through your means I was slain, do you think that you can always ensure the silence of your now ready instruments; or, their not acting towards you in the same manner as you have towards others?"

"I care not," Laborde replied, "if they should do so. I imagine the preservation of my secret is my own affair. Yours is, whether you will experience the gratitude of the world, and be in the end condemned, though you have been weak enough to observe the shackles it imposes upon the freedom of our actions."

"Think not," said Vernon interrupting him, "that my resolution arises from having my judgment guided by that of others; were the world to say with one unanimous voice, that I was

wrong to prefer my child's honor to death, and my conscience were to support me then as it does now, in spite of the universal opinion, I should still adhere to my determination. If you be going this night on an expedition for the purpose of blinding the world to all knowledge of your conduct, the sooner you proceed, and favor me with your absence, the more you will oblige me."

"Decidedly, Major Vernon," Laborde replied, "since you are so soon to quit this globe, and to cease from tasting its pleasures, it would be most cruel of me to refuse you so small a gratification, one which you so earnestly desire, and one it is so easy in my power to confer. I will trouble you no farther; and wishing that your hosts may for once be inclined to be merciful, and be tempted to shorten your torments with the tomahawk, I say farewell." Making a ceremonious bow, and indulging in a low laugh, Laborde withdrew.

Instantaneous with the disappearance of the luminary of the day below the horizon, of which

event the Piquots were informed by a warrior stationed upon the summit of the lodge of the chief mystery man, the Indians proceeded on their journey, and quitted their homes for the last time.

Within the 'Valley of Piquot bones,' all was silence and watchfulness, for the scouts had detected the movements of their enemies. The Iroquois, ignorant of the cause that had led their neighbours to arm and sally forth, fearful of some stratagem, had remained in perfect preparation.

From an open attack they were secured by the strength of their position; from a ruse, they sought to protect themselves by sending out their spies, and then awaited with patience until this strange proceeding should be explained.

Having seen that every thing was arranged, Tasharah mounted towards the dwelling of the 'lone woman,' for the purpose of consulting with her upon the intentions and designs of the warriors, who had been discovered quitting the Piquot lodges.

Arrived at her residence, she immediately appeared upon his sounding the wonted signal, and in answer to her enquiries, he said,

"A Mohawk upon his war-path never sleeps, his eyes are ever open; he is as the cunning little animal that wars with the young birds. The Piquots have gone from their lodges, and their braves are painted for war."

"My son speaks well," said the old woman, "the Piquots have gone to bury their dead, for a deceitful priest has sung in their ears, 'Athaensic would that the white-headed warrior should die; but she would not that the young men see the old Yengese die.' Let them go to bury their dead."

"Then are the Piquots foolish as the bird that flies to meet the great snake, or as the heavy moose that leaves so broad a trail, to tell where it goes. Whom have a nation of women left in their village?" enquired the Mohawk.

"A deceitful priest, old warriors, papooses, and squaws, a Yengese prisoner, and the scalps

of the Iroquois drying in the smoke of their lodges."

"Then shall the Piquots tremble at the whoop of the Iroquois!" exclaimed the chief joyfully, and unable to conceal the pleasure he derived from these tidings, "Tasharah will take many scalps, and will bear away the Yengese, and the fair maiden shall be his."

"Let the Mohawk take the scalps of the Piquot wolves, then shall the daughter of the Yengese be to the leaping panther of the Iroquois. Let my son listen to the words of the 'lone woman.' The Piquots have gone a journey of a quarter of a moon, and does not the deer travel fast? When the owl begins his whoop, and the frogs to call upon one another, let my son leap upon the lodges of the Piquots, let him sound his whoop of blood, and tell his young men to slay all that dwell in the lodges, and all that are warmed by the fires that dry the scalps of their fathers."

"Tasharah has heard the words of the 'lone

woman,' and they are good," said the Indian, as he turned to descend, and never before did he bound down the craggy road that led to the widow's dwelling, with a heart so light as that which he now possessed.

The witch, immediately he had quitted her, entered her cave to prepare herself for the last visit she ever hoped to pay to the Piquot lodges.

When Laborde quitted Vernon, the latter began to reflect upon his disagreeable situation, and also to consider how far it was possible for the old woman to perform her promise. The more he thought, the more desperate did his case appear. In whatever position he regarded it, he saw no loophole by which hope might enter. Whilst thus occupied, the current of his thoughts was arrested by the entrance of some one; supposing it to be Laborde again returned for the purpose of once more attempting to terrify or persuade him into acquiescence with his wishes, he determined to make no sign that he was cognisant of the other's presence, for he imagined

he had sufficiently explained to him how little desirable he considered his company.

After some minutes however, he was surprised to hear the voice of a perfect stranger, who spoke, in a most confounding manner, a dialect entirely of his own, consisting of bad French, worse English, but very good grammatical Indian. This, we will render in its true sense, and after some consideration the Major fortunately understood it.

"Let the Yengese warrior listen to Shohaske, the cunning mystery-man of the Piquots," said the intruder, who was indeed the conjurer, and who, now that Laborde had departed, thought he might as well sound the prisoner upon the score of how much he would be inclined to give to avoid the stake on the morrow; for, having received his wages from the Frenchman, he considered himself free to do a little more business.

"I listen," replied Vernon, who had learned thus much of Indian conversation, and was eager to know for what purpose he was honored

by a visit from a personage of the consequence of the priest.

"The Yengese warrior is to die on the next sun," said Shohaske, informing the Major of a circumstance that the latter knew was quite bad enough to be true.

"I l sten," observed Vernon, again availing himself of his limited knowledge of the Indian tongue.

"That is good," said the conjurer, who proceeded at once to make his proposition. "The Yengese is cunning, and wise as the old owl. The hand of the stranger among the lodges was open that Shohaske might say, Let the white headed warrior die. What will the Yengese give that he may say, let him live?"

Vernon, remembering the words of Laborde, that it should be reported he had come by his death through tampering with his jailors, immediately considered that the visit of the priest was to cause him to commit himself, and he warily replied, with seeming indignation in his tone:

"No! I would never think of accepting freedom if it were only to be obtained by paying for treachery in others. You may return to your master and tell him what I have said."

The conjurer, whose knowledge of English was very circumscribed, could not understand Vernon's meaning, yet he knew sufficient to perceive that his offer had been rejected, for some reason that he could not imagine. Resolved not to lose the handsome bribe that he considerd the prisoner ought to give for his life, he returned to the charge.

"The ears of the Yengese are heavy; he understands not the words of Shohaske, who serves Athaensic, and not the man spirit, Areskoni."

"I am perfectly aware," Vernon replied, "whom it is you serve, and that the power which commands you is the Frenchman, Laborde. It is he who is concerned in the offer you are making me, and the which I refuse. It is useless to attempt the deception; I recognise the trap, and will avoid it."

Understanding who was referred to as being his master, the priest quickly comprehended the reason that Vernon had for declining his offer; and, as the wily conjurer had always considerable patience where his interest was concerned, he now undertook the removal of so great an obstacle to the opening of the negotiation as suspicion of his integrity.

"Let the Yengese warrior listen. The stranger among the lodges, whom white men call Laborde, is gone with the Piquots to bury their dead. Let the Yengese listen," he continued, observing the other was about to interrupt him; "the hand of the stranger is close: will that of the white headed Chief be more open, if Shohaske say, He shall not die? If the wise man cut his cords, and lead him to the valley of Piquot bones, what will he give? If he say that he will give nothing, let him sing his death song, for on the next sun he shall die at the Piquot stake."

"Your words may be spoken in faith, yet how am I to know you are not deceiving me?" re-

plied Vernon, who, from the earnest manner of the speaker, felt inclined to believe him, though remembering the threat of Laborde, he considered the conjurer's proposition to be in strange accordance with it. "How am I to know, if I were to make you an offer, that you would not go directly to your master, and divulge it?—How will you show me that you are sincere?"

The Indian, after some consideration, observed, "Were Shohaske to cut the cords of the Yengese, and to give to him his little thunder and long knife, would he know that the words of a Piquot are true?"

"Decidedly; if you will furnish me with my sword and pistols, I shall be far more inclined to put faith in what you may undertake to perform, and might then listen to your proposals."

"Let the Yengese wait," said the conjurer, who, quitting the lodge, went in search of the above articles with which he soon returned; and, having freed Vernon from his bonds, he placed the weapons in the hands of the latter.

The Major received his arms with joy; but, upon examining his pistols, he found that they had not been recharged since he had last made use of them, and were therefore perfectly useless. His sword he handled with pleasure, and, drawing it from its scabbard, ran his eyes over the blade to discover that it had sustained no damage by having been in other hands.

"Does the Yengese now believe the words of Shohaske?" inquired the conjurer.

"I do not object now to treat with you, since, having weapons in my hands, were your master nigh, and a host of his followers ready at his beck, he could but cause me to die as a soldier. But, before we speak upon the subject of your proposal, you must obtain for me charges for my pistols. You will find all that is requisite in the belt I had on when taken prisoner."

"Let the white headed warrior listen. When the Yengese shall have his lightning, he will be as the rattlesnake, able to bite. What will he give to Shohaske for the lightning?"

"What do you desire?" inquired Vernon;

"is it money, or spirits, or rifles? Give me charges for my pistols, and show me how to escape, and you shall be well rewarded."

"Will the Yengese fill the pitcher of Shohaske twice, if he give him teeth to bite with?" said the priest, with a little hesitation, for he was conscious of what an exorbitant payment he was requiring.

"I suppose it is with spirits you wish me to fill it? I promise you to do so on the first opportunity, provided you obtain for me what I just now required."

"The Yengese speaks well," the conjurer observed, and quitting the lodge, after a short absence he returned bearing the officer's belt. The latter, without further delay, began to load his weapons.

"What will the Yengese give if, when the female sun is high, Shohaske should show him the way from the Piquot lodges?" said the priest, who began to regret having placed the prisoner in so independent a position.

"If you will faithfully perform this service,"

replied Vernon, whilst he primed one of his pistols, "I will give you two gallons of rum."

"Shohaske knows how much is in his pitcher but he knows not how much is the two gallons of the Yengese. If he show the white war Chief the path from the Piquot lodges, will the pitcher of Shohaske be filled with good rum as often as he has fingers?"

"Life is, of itself, to me valueless," said Vernon, "but I have a child, and for her would live. On this account, I accept the offer of your services upon the terms you have mentioned."

"Shohaske has heard the words of the Yengese, and they are good. When the female sun shall be high, the white Chief will put his foot upon the ground, for the road from the lodges will be before his eyes." As Shohaske said this, he turned to depart, when he was arrested by the Major, who said,

"Stay, we have not yet concluded our agreement. Of what value will it be to me if you should show me the path from the lodges, I

should, being ignorant wither to go, only wander about; and to-morrow, being pursued, should be overtaken and slain. It would be far better to await my tormentors, and sell my life dearly, than to attempt a fruitless and unsuccessful escape."

"Does the Yengese think that Shohaske is dull or foolish? The white Chief shall be in the valley of 'Piquot bones' when the next sun shall leave the distant lake."

"The valley of Piquot bones! that is the very spot I could most desire to be in. My daughter," he was about to say, is there; but he checked himself, and merely observed, "has told me the tale of the Onondaga widow."

Though he had hindered himself from giving the full information, yet Vernon had uttered enough in his exclamation to convince the conjurer that there was some one there in whom he took far more interest than in an old woman, or painted warriors, and the priest said, "A bird has sung in the ears of Shohaske,—In the valley of Piquot bones there is a fair maiden, and her father is among the lodges of the Piquots."

"How came you to know this?" inquired Vernon, surprised at the knowledge of the priest, and fearful that the same knowledge was shared by a more hateful individual. "Who informed you of the presence of my daughter in the valley?"

"Does not Shohaske serve Athaensic, and does she not talk to him? But," he continued, rightly ascribing the Major's fears to their true source, and hastening to allay them, "let not the white warrior fear, for the stranger among the lodges knows not that the dove is nigh his nest."

"Are you positive," said Vernon eagerly, "that it is not to the valley Laborde has gone?"

"Has not Shohaske," the conjurer replied, "said that the stranger among the lodges has gone with the warriors to bury their dead?"

"You have told me so, and I suppose that I must credit you. I shall expect you at midnight to fulfil your undertaking, and our agreement. But, you must consider of some excuse to prevent the entrance of your countrymen."

"Shohaske is a cunning owl; the leaf of his

memory is green and fresh," said the priest, who, as he spoke, quitted the Major, leaving the latter now not altogether certain but that the conversation he had just held would speedily be repeated. Whilst he was thus musing, the Onondaga woman entered the lodge.

Surprised at finding the officer so well armed, she spoke not for some minutes; but then said, whilst a laugh so hollow accompanied her words, that Vernon was startled by it. " The Piquots shall light a bright fire, but their nation will weep. The Yengese warrior can bite, for a deceitful priest has given him claws to tear his own people with."

" One of the mystery men of the Piquots, who called himself Shohaske, offered for some rum to conduct me to the valley of Piquot Bones; and I accepted his proposal, for I feared you would be unable to perform your promise."

" The white chief did wrong," said the old woman, " for is not Shohaske a lying and deceitful man, and had not the woman of the Onondagas promised to be with the Yengese?

But let him listen to her words. The panther of the Iroquois is nigh, and the Piquots will soon hear his ' whoop of blood.' Let the warrior of the Yengese beware, for then may the old men say, ' The Mengwe are taking the scalps of our children—let us slay the white chief, before the Iroquois know where he is.' "

" They will not find it a matter of much ease to overpower me, provided as I am with weapons. But is my daughter in safety? Will she be secure from danger while the attack is being made? Is she protected from harm?"

" The words of the Yengese are good," replied the old woman. " He has his long knife, and the Piquots ought not to touch his scalp. The maiden of the Yengese is well, and is now in the dwelling of the lone woman. Let the warrior be ready for battle, when the female sun shall look thus much into his cabin."

Calculating the period when the Iroquois would attack, she pointed to the spot where the moon's rays would fall at that period, which she admitted into the lodge, by putting a portion

of the matting, which served as a door, aside. Having given this information, she departed to take up her position in an old cabin, from whence she might feast her eyes, and glut her ears, upon the destruction of her enemies.

The moon's shadow gradually traversed the floor of the small apartment, and her light slowly approached the indicated spot, becoming a dial whose minutest motion told how quickly approached the fate of a tribe.

One single finger's breadth had now alone to be traversed. Major Vernon listened, in breathless suspense, for some token of the coming contest; but all was silent as the wings of time. He strained each nerve, but nothing came to break the stillness of the night, save the distant hootings of some owl, or the hoarse reply of the bull-frog, mingled with the howlings of some prowling wolf. The wind, as it played among the leaves of the forest, could also be distinguished, sounding as the falling of some far-off summer ocean's tide. Occasionally it passed in a fitful gust, and with a low moaning, as though

the spirits of the fathers of the Piquots were circling round the habitations of their sons, and were, at times, raising their voices in angry expostulations upon their negligence: at others, seeking to warn them of their approaching danger; or now, with melancholy plaints and wails, caused from witnessing the destruction of a part of their nation. The fatal shadow diminishes to less almost than a line. The hand of the prisoner clasps more firmly the hilt of his sword, and the fingers of the other press convulsively the trigger of a pistol. The spot is gained, and then—as if the pale cold rays of the moon had forgotten their character of peace, and with their light had fired the torch of war, or sinking deep into the caverns of the earth, had, with their unwonted beams, awoke the fiends of blood, who repose their grim and horrid forms on couches thick with gore, and, arousing them from rest, had summoned them to earth—loud were the whoops of the Mengwe, and fearfully did its unexpected sound strike on the ears of the sleep-awakened and terrified Piquots. The mother, in

her agony of fright, shrieked, and guided by her cries the slayers to her babes., Boys and youths opposed but small resistance to strong and lusty manhood. The aged, who awoke not at the first sound, remained for ever deaf. Yet there were a few who seized the knife, and wielded the tomahawk of ancient battles; and some who hurried, as the old woman had foreseen, to colour their enemies' victory with their prisoner's blood.

Three of his foes were down, but five still pressed upon him; for, stung to madness by their infants' cries, the enraged Piquots sought to obtain vengeance by his death.

"The arm of the Yengese reaches far, but let us see if the lightning of his people does not reach farther," said an Indian, presenting his rifle at the Major, who had, until this, succeeded in keeping his foes at bay, by the superior length of his weapon; but now there seemed no possibility of his escaping destruction, for the Piquot's aim was sure.

"Die! dog of the Piquots!" exclaimed a

voice; and the utterer sprang through the entrance of the lodge, burying his tomahawk, as he did so, deep in the Indian's brain: and the next instant Vernon recognised Tasharah, whose quick and vigorous blows soon slew, or drove the remainder of his enemies forth.

END OF VOLUME II.

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